



Department of Language and Linguistics

University of Essex

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**The suitability of the EFL reading texts at the secondary and
preparatory levels as a preparation for academic reading at first
year university level in Saudi Arabia**

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Department of Language and Linguistics
University of Essex**

Abstract

The study investigates the suitability of the English reading texts at lower education level(s) (secondary school, and preparatory level) in helping to prepare students to meet the reading demands placed on them at the next education level(s) (preparatory and first year university level) which may include more academic and specialised texts. The data of the study was gathered from three sources. First, we analysed the reading texts used at three different educational levels, namely, secondary (two textbook series), preparatory, and FYU level in three disciplines - English and Translation study, Medicine, and Engineering. Second, we obtained students' perceptions at the three educational levels through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews about the suitability of the reading texts used at their level and/or the previous level in preparing them to deal with the reading texts encountered at the current and/or the subsequent educational level. Finally, we obtained teachers' perspectives on text suitability at the three educational levels by using semi-structured interviews. The study adopted a mixed methods approach. The data was analysed quantitatively using SPSS, and qualitatively using thematic analysis. The findings revealed marked differences between the reading texts in the two secondary level English series. Furthermore, the reading texts offered at preparatory level were less demanding than the reading texts at the preceding level. In addition, the reading texts at the pre-university levels differ greatly from the reading that the students encounter at the FYU level, especially in medicine and engineering disciplines. Furthermore both secondary and preparatory level students and teachers believed that the reading texts currently offered at each level did not adequately prepare students for their reading at the next educational level. Finally, medicine and engineering students and their teachers at FYU level concurred that the reading texts at the preparatory level are not sufficient in preparing students to read specialist university textbooks. The English and translation students and their teachers however found the reading at preparatory

level was useful preparation, due to their first year reading not being in fact of academic specialist subject textbooks. Important implications for stakeholders are discussed.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to

My loving parents whom I cherish with all my heart

My dear wife and children

I also dedicate this thesis to my late grandmother, who passed away on 29 June 2014.

May Allah's mercy and forgiveness be upon her soul. Amen!

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List of Abbreviations

Saudi Arabia	KSA
English as a Foreign Language	EFL
English as a second Language	ESL
State Schools	SSs
Northern Borders University	NBU
Ministry of Education	MoE
Native Speaker	NS
First language (Mother tongue)	L1
RT(s)	Reading text(s)
Engn	Engineering
Med	Medicine
Eng & Tra	English and translation
Sec.S	Secondary level students
Sec.T	Secondary level teacher
Prep.S	Preparatory student
Prep.T	Preparatory teacher
Engn.S	Engineering student
Engn.T	Engineering teacher
Med.S	Medical student
Med.T	Medical teacher
Eng.S	English and translation student
Eng.T	English and translation Teacher

1 Chapter One: Background to the Study

1.1. Introduction

This chapter establishes the theoretical and contextual background for the current study. The first part of the chapter discusses the reading in higher education contexts, and sets the background of the current study. The second part describes the features of the Saudi educational context, focusing specifically on the importance of reading in the context of Northern Borders University (NBU) (the site of the study). This is followed by the study rationale, the significant of the study, the research questions, and finally, the thesis outline.

1.2. Reading in higher education

In this era of globalisation, English has become the international language of communication (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999; Crystal, 2003) and the language of research (Al-Hajailan, 2003). For this reason, English is now the medium of instruction in most specialisations such as science, engineering, and medicine at many universities in EFL countries (e.g. the Gulf countries, Iran, and Taiwan) (Dearden, 2014).

The decision to stipulate English as the medium of instruction in EFL universities has had a huge impact on students' university experiences in these countries. Indeed, English proficiency level is now a major factor in determining students' higher academic success (e.g. Stoyhoff, 1997). For this reason, some EFL countries, such as Japan (Stout, 2003) and Taiwan (Pan & Newfields, 2012) now require potential students to pass an English proficiency test before entering university. However, in Saudi Arabia (KSA), students undertake a preparatory year to

hopefully attain a suitable English level to enable them to study in an English-medium university.

Students at English-medium universities encounter an environment with its own academic culture, requirements, and conventional ways of meaning-making. All first year university (FYU) students have to learn new literacy practices to assist them to function successfully in a higher education context. Students must master the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), in addition to more concealed practices such as analytical and critical thinking skills. According to Lea and Street (1998, p. 158),

Learning in higher education involves adapting to new ways of knowing: new ways of understanding, interpreting and organising knowledge. Academic literacy practices--reading and writing within disciplines--constitute central processes through which students learn new subjects and develop their knowledge about new areas of study.

While not discounting the importance of other literacy practices, some argue that academic reading is the most important skill for university students to succeed in their academic studies (Levine, Ferenz & Reves, 2000). This is because academic knowledge is acquired principally by reading (Shen, 2013), and reading is the means through which researchers communicate information (Tarchi, 2010). Furthermore, through reading, EFL/ ESL students may acquire both the language unique to their disciplines and subject knowledge.

Characteristically, studying at university level emphasises academic reading, as learning is largely mediated through the written language (Hyland, 2006, p. 39), and students must understand the language used in their disciplines to succeed in their studies (Biber, 2006). Students reading academic textbooks to gain knowledge must comprehend not only unfamiliar vocabulary and the general meaning of the texts, but also any implicit meaning and variations in

opinions regarding the same issue. They might then be required to sit exams or write assignments, so that their competence in various disciplines and fields can be assessed. Their success or failure depends primarily on their comprehension of what they read. In other words, if students fail to understand the written texts in their disciplines successfully, they are unlikely to perform well in their examinations or assignments. According to Biber (2006) both native and non-native new university students encounter a perplexing range of difficulties and adjustments, and most of these obstacles are related to mastering the use of language in new ways. The predominant difficulty is the ability to comprehend complex academic language in texts which they read (Biber, 2006).

Developing reading skills in EFL/ESL contexts presents the students with a number of challenging tasks, and the most well-known one is possibly the vocabulary knowledge that students need to know (Nation, 2006). Another challenge is dealing with and understanding the complex grammar used in the reading texts (RTs) (Grabe, 2005). A further challenge that is closely related to the above ones, and which may not be clear for many students, is the 'register' of the written texts (Biber, 2006). Moreover, reading comprehension can be difficult if the students have not already built up background knowledge about the topics covered in the texts (Grabe & Stoller, 2011, 2002; Alderson, 2000).

A number of corpus studies reveal significant differences between the language of academic texts and other texts such as newspapers or fiction (Biber et al., 1999). In addition, other studies also show differences between registers within academic contexts (Thakur, 1965; Porter, 1976; Robinson, 1980; Biber, 1988; Hyland, 1999; Conrad, 2000). According to Biber (2006, p. 2), the differences between registers in academic context "are even more important than most of us would expect". As a consequence of these variations among registers, it has long been suggested by many researchers that register features should be taken into consideration in

teaching English learners, especially those who are about to start their university education (e.g. Coxhead & Byrd, 2007; Biber, 2006).

Where English language is used as the medium of instruction in universities and colleges in EFL contexts, the Ministries of Education and Higher Education should give teaching English language high priority, especially English reading with taking into account the variation of different academic registers. It should be a primary concern that inadequate English teaching at pre-university level may contribute to low levels of achievement at the tertiary level across disciplines. Therefore, it is paramount that students receive sufficient English knowledge and skills training to facilitate their university studies.

While according to Biber (2006, p.1), English programmes in EFL and ESL contexts have been “more innovative in matching the language instruction to the actual language task required in the university courses”, others argue that many ESL students starting university are not well prepared for the reading tasks they will encounter (e.g. Freahat, 2014; Abdul-Hamid & Samuel, 2012; Shafie & Nayan 2011; Shelyakina, 2010; Dreyer & Nel, 2003; Al-Arfaj, 1996).

This current study aims to contribute to this debate by investigating a particular EFL context (KSA), to determine the degree to which the RTs currently used at secondary school level help to prepare the students to meet the reading requirements at the next educational level (preparatory university level). It will also explore how the RTs used at university preparatory level help students to deal with the reading they encounter at FYU level in three disciplines: engineering, medicine, and English and translation. It is hoped that such research would not only benefit the KSA context but also many other EFL countries.

1.3. The current study

There is an increasing body of research that addresses L2 students' reading needs at the higher education level (Freahat, 2014; Christison & Krahne, 1986; Ostler, 1980; Smoke, 1988). A number of researchers (e.g. Biber, 1988; Biber et al., 1999; Biber et al., 2002; Biber, 2006; Hyland, 1994; Barbieri and Eckhardt, 2007; Biber & Gray, 2010) have examined the written academic register, offering valuable information about the general characteristics unique to the academic English register. Such information has become the basis for improvements to English language courses, especially those aiming to prepare students for their university studies and academic reading. Other studies have proposed some thresholds that L2 learners need to reach in order to read academic texts successfully; for example, defining vocabulary thresholds in terms of vocabulary size and vocabulary coverage (e.g. Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010). Moreover, other researchers have emphasised the importance of students' prior disciplinary knowledge and associated schemata (e.g. Carrell, 1984).

It is further argued that reading itself, rather than other forms of instruction, is the most important means by which learners can improve their reading ability. Krashen (1989, p. 455) claims that "my suspicion is that reading is not simply a way to develop vocabulary, spelling, and other important aspects of competence, it is the only way". In addition, Grabe (2009, p. 216) states, if learners are to attain "fluency and automaticity with syntactic processing...they need extensive exposure and practice in reading and exploiting relevant and appropriate texts." By implication, then, it is critical that RTs taught at the pre-university level share some vocabulary, content, and grammar features with university texts to meet the criterion of being "relevant and appropriate texts".

In this study, the focus is therefore on investigating the RTs that KSA learners at the NBU are exposed to at three educational levels: secondary level, preparatory level, and FYU level (each level will be explained fully later in this chapter). The reason for starting the evaluation at the secondary level rather than earlier is that it is considered the first level which has as one of its aims to prepare students for academic reading required for university.

The study examines the suitability of RTs in three ways. First, the RTs at each level are analysed according to different criteria in order to determine whether the RTs taught at the lower level have the potential to prepare students sufficiently for the higher level. The features compared in this study are vocabulary, including academic vocabulary, readability (sentence and word length), text length, selected academic syntactic features, and textual content (topics). Second, the current study attempts to give students a voice to express their opinions about the suitability of the RTs at one level in preparing for the reading at the next educational level. Finally, the current study also provides an opportunity for those English teachers using RTs with their students at secondary and preparatory levels to express their opinions regarding the suitability of the RTs in preparing their students for the next educational level, and for the FYU subject teachers to express their views about the RTs students have studied at the preparatory level in preparing the students for the reading demands in their disciplines.

This study will be conducted in Arar city in the KSA, and participants will be students and teachers at the secondary level, students and teachers at the preparatory level, and FYU level students, and teachers from three disciplines (medicine, engineering, and English and translation disciplines) at the NBU. The next section of this chapter offers a detailed description of the context of the study.

1.4. The education system and English language teaching in Saudi state schools

The Saudi education system is highly centralised, with all decisions made from the top down, as Alshumaim and Alhassan (2010, p.524) states that “all educational policies are subject to government control and supervision by the Supreme Council of Education. Curricula, syllabi and textbooks are uniform throughout the kingdom”

The Saudi education system employs single sex education, whereby boys and girls are separated at all educational levels, but study the same standard curriculum. In the KSA, students have the opportunity to either study at free state schools (SSs), or go to private schools.

General education in the KSA is divided into four levels. The first level, which is optional, is pre-elementary and lasts 2 years. The aim of this stage is to prepare children, who enrol at the age of four, for the next stage, elementary level. The elementary level starts at the age of 6 and lasts for 6 years. In the lower years (1-3), the focus is on Arabic language and culture, basic maths and Islamic values. In the upper years (4-6), additional courses are taught, e.g. geography, history, and recently the English language.

According to Al-Seghayer (2011, p. 8) it is unclear when English was exactly first taught in the KSA, but he states that “most of the researchers seem to agree that its formal beginning was in 1928”. The first introduction of the English language as a subject at elementary level was in 2003, when it was limited to the sixth grade. However, since 2012, the English language has been taught from the fourth grade. It is noteworthy that pupils can choose to study English earlier in private schools. All the student participants in this study (more details are given in the methodology chapter) had received only 7 years (from grade six) of formal English instruction at school before beginning their tertiary studies.

The reason given for delaying the introduction of the English language until grade 4 (or earlier, until grade 6) is to afford Saudi learners additional time to focus on acquiring their own language, culture and Islamic values. Once introduced, the English curriculum at elementary level focuses principally on the alphabet, English sounds, and basic vocabulary. The topic of English language teaching is controversial; some studies in the Arab world suggest that introducing English in the early years requires too much class time and homework negatively affecting the acquisition of the mother tongue (e.g. Al-Shammary, 1989). By contrast, others argue that learning a new language positively affects learners' awareness and intelligence, broadening their horizons (e.g. Aljohani, 2016). Certainly, the Ministry of Education (MoE) still needs to give this matter further consideration to make the best decision for the Saudi context.

The third level at which English is taught is the intermediate level (grades 7-9) which covers 3 years. Learners begin this level aged about 12, and the education they receive is almost identical to that at the elementary stage, with the inclusion of some short RTs and conversations.

The fourth level is the secondary one, which lasts 3 years (grades 10-12). At this point learners are introduced to more advanced courses than at the intermediate stage, with a specific focus on RTs, which will be the focal point of this study, and writing. The main feature of the secondary stage is that pupils must choose whether to pursue their studies in science, or social science and arts subjects after year one (grade 10). However, all the students study similar English materials. Since the secondary level is evaluated in this study, more details about the objectives of English teaching at this level and the English series used will be presented in the following sections.

1.4.1. The objectives of English teaching in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia

There are three sets of stated objectives when teaching English in SSs: one for the elementary stage, one for the intermediate stage, and the last for the secondary stage. This section discusses

those secondary stage objectives specifically related to reading skills. The author's comments are in *italics*.

1. To afford the secondary school students an experience of the world.

“Experience of the world” is a vague term and it is unclear how this would be achieved: Through reading? By offering authentic reading materials? It is also unclear what ‘the world’ implies relative to the range of topics covered: The whole world? Western countries? KSA as a nation? The wider Muslim world?

2. To give secondary school students an experience of delight through reading samples of English that have universal appeal, both in arts and science.

This objective is a little clearer than the previous one and it is admirable to emphasise that learning should be enjoyable. However, to achieve this objective, students should be provided with a wide variety of RTs and sufficient vocabulary to enable them to achieve a threshold vocabulary to permit them to read without too much difficulty. The current study will investigate the vocabulary level of the RTs used at the secondary stage and compare them with the RTs at the preparatory level and the university level in three different disciplines (medicine, English and translation, engineering).

3. To activate pupils' critical thinking as a useful adjunct and intelligent approach when reading English texts.

Students need this skill at university level; however, it is outside our scope to determine whether it has been dealt with or not, since it depends on questions being asked about the text, rather than the text itself.

4. To give play to the students' imagination by means of imagery, poetry and visualization of character.

It is not clear how this objective would be achieved since there is no poetry in current textbooks.

5. To provide students who intend to attend university and other higher education institutions with adequate knowledge of English, to help them in their future studies.

This objective is the most important, and is the foundation of and motivation behind the study. It is doubtful if this objective has been achieved as all the universities in the KSA, including the NBU, since the students, who have just finished secondary school, enrol on obligatory intensive English courses in their Preparatory year, before embarking on their majors, as a remedy for their poor English level. This study aims to investigate to what extent the RTs at this level prepare the students for the reading level at the preparatory level, and also to investigate whether the RTs at the preparatory level are sufficient to prepare the students to meet the reading requirements of FYU level.

6. To give the student who finishes their formal education in the third year sufficient knowledge of the language in their education.

This is too vague an objective and does not explain "sufficient for what". It does not clarify what functions someone leaving school should be able to perform in English.

7. To help the student to gain a reasonable command of English to be in a better position to defend Islam against adverse influences and to participate in dissemination of Islamic culture.
8. To enable the students to speak English well to give them the opportunity to preach the principles of Islam.

The above two objectives are related to religion, and are arguably overambitious. A specialist course would be required in order to achieve these objectives. In addition, objective number 7 is unclear, as “reasonable” is not defined.

9. To help the students to gain a reasonable mastery of the four language skills in three years, which are :

- Listening with understanding of spoken English.
- Speaking modern English correctly with proper stress and intonation.
- Reading English texts that vary in difficulty from adapted and simplified texts to originals in abridged form with understanding.
- Writing a connected passage of up to a full page on a subject of a descriptive or discursive nature.

This objective seems to be more specific regarding reading skills. However, it uses the vague word ‘reasonable’ rather than, say, an internationally recognised proficiency specification such as ‘CEFR B2’, and this is what this study may clarify: whether RTs progress gradually over the three educational levels.

10. To foster an interest in reading so that in the future learners are prepared to read many reference books, periodicals and pamphlets pertaining to their future field of specialisation.

Again this objective is related to and could be achieved through objectives number 2 and 5.

11. To stress the utilitarian point of view that learning a foreign language is a useful tool for cultural as well as social and economic communication.

It is unclear how this objective can be achieved: Through reading, or oral communication with other English speakers?

Although the objectives emphasise reading and the needs of the university, it appears that most of these objectives in their current form are not sufficiently well explained or specific enough. In addition, there is no mention of specific themes or types of RTs that students should be exposed to, or are there any objectives focusing on grammar or vocabulary building.

1.4.2. English language Series at the State Secondary School level

All the English series taught in SSs are designed and managed by the MoE. However, some private schools teach English earlier, using different textbooks. In the Northern Border Province, two English series are used in the secondary schools. The first one is *English for Saudi Arabia* (EFSA), and was designed and published in the KSA under the supervision of the MoE (Al-Hajailan, 2003). This textbook series is continuously evaluated and improved upon with alterations to lay-out and topic changes.

In 2013, *Flying High for Saudi Arabia* (FHFSa) was introduced. This is also published under the supervision of the MoE. Some schools were chosen to employ EFSA and others to use FHFSa; the General Directorate for Educational Affairs in the Northern Border Province decides this. Other parts of the curriculum, such as the aims, teaching hours, and evaluation methods are consistent across all schools. There are currently two English series options because of ongoing English teaching improvements, which involve trialling new textbooks in selected schools before introducing them elsewhere. Thus, hopefully, this study will assist decision makers in determining which series is most effective. The following sections provide an overview of each series.

The time spent teaching English in SSs varies according to the level. At the elementary level, students receive two classes (45 minutes each class) per week during the 32 week academic year. The number of classes increases to four classes per week at intermediate and secondary levels.

All the English teachers in schools hold a BA in English, and are either Saudis or from Arab countries, such as Egypt. There are no native English or non-Arabic speaking teachers working in schools. The teachers do not receive any training programmes regarding teaching English in school, but they are given teachers' books and they must use only textbooks and materials designed by the MoE. They must follow the sequence of the topics in the textbooks, and teach the entire textbook in the allocated time. The syllabus is not separately stated: in effect, the textbook is the syllabus.

At all three levels, students have to pass their individual subject related examinations with pass rates of at least 50%, in order to attain the required certificate and move to a higher level. However, a student can move up to the next level if s/he scores below 50% in one subject, unless this subject is one of the Arabic or Islamic subjects, in which case a re-sit must be taken (MoE, 2013). Students are also required to sit paper-based mid-term exams and end-of-term exams every term. These exams, including the final end-of-secondary-school exam, are no longer prepared by the MoE, but have been left to the English teachers in each school, who also marked them. Therefore, the examinations differ from one teacher to another in terms of content, but share similarities as they must adhere to guidance from the MoE on the components to be included in the test. For example, all the tests contain reading passages accompanied with some questions; however, each passage might differ from one teacher to another.

1.4.2.1. English for Saudi Arabia (EFSA)

This English series consists of 8 books. Table 1.1 shows the number of textbooks and other materials available in each year.

Table 1.1: The distribution of the EFSA textbooks at the secondary level.

Secondary Year	Number of textbooks	Other materials
Year one	2 student books	Teachers' book, posters, one audio tape
Year two	2 student books	Teachers' book, posters, one audio tape
Year three	2 student books and 2 writing books	Teachers' book, posters, one audio tape

All the English textbooks were written in English only, with no Arabic words used in them. Instead, a lot of pictures were included to help the students understand the content. Each textbook is taught over one term (except for Year three, two books are taught in each term) and covers six units, each of which is based around a single content based topic such as *Saudi universities*. Each unit consists of six to seven lessons (See Appendix A, which contains an example of one unit). Each lesson covers one language skill or language aspect, such as grammar or vocabulary. The first lesson focuses on listening and speaking. The second lesson provides practice with the grammar used in lesson one. The third lesson focuses on reading, exposing students to a RT. In the fourth lesson, the focus is on the vocabulary which is normally used in the third lesson. In this lesson the students read the definitions of the selected vocabulary in English and complete a vocabulary task to reinforce the new vocabulary. The fifth lesson focuses on writing skills and the students are asked to write memos or short paragraphs about something related to the main topic of the unit. The sixth and the seventh lessons contain activities and revise the grammar taught in earlier lessons. The current study collates and analyses all the RTs included in all formats (dialogue and essay).

It is noteworthy that in the EFSA, one or two skills are given additional attention according to the year of study: Year One concentrates on speaking and listening, Year Two focuses on reading skills, and Year Three emphasises writing (Al-Qurashi et al, 1995). Therefore, lessons 6 and 7 in the textbooks vary to reflect the focus of the textbooks. For example, in Year Two, lessons 6 and 7 relate more to reading.

1.4.2.2. Flying High for Saud Arabia (FHFSa)

This English series consists of 12 textbooks. Table 1.2 summarises the number of textbooks and materials used in each secondary year.

Table 1.2: The distribution of the FHFSa textbooks at the secondary level.

Secondary Year	Number of textbooks	Other materials
Year one	2 student books & 2 workbooks	Teachers' book, posters, one audio tape
Year two	2 student books & 2 workbooks	Teachers' book, posters, one audio tape
Year three	2 student books & 2 workbooks	Teachers' book, posters, one audio tape

Similar to the EFSA, no Arabic words appear in the textbooks, although they contain pictures that help the students understand the content. This English series has been used since 2013 in some secondary schools, and is introduced gradually starting from Year One at secondary level. Because the Flying High series was first introduced into Grade 10 in 2013, and then into Grades 10 and 11 in 2014, and Grades 10, 11 and 12 in 2015, those students studying from the Flying High series had not yet graduated from the secondary stage at the time of data collection. Therefore, all the students who participated in this research had used EFSA. Similarly, all the teachers selected for this study had been using EFSA.

In each term, one students' book and a workbook are used. The students' book and the workbook are related and complementary; thus, the students' book and workbook both comprise 8 units. Each unit discusses one topic or theme in both books, such as *Technology*, *Sport*. Each unit contains four lessons in the students' book and three in the workbook. Each lesson (in the students' book and the workbook) is divided into three to five sections; each section focuses on one or two skills (e.g. listening and/or speaking), in addition to vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation (Appendix B contains one unit as an example). The main reading tasks are typically included in lesson 4.

1.4.3. Teaching English reading in schools

When teaching reading in English, all teachers have to use textbooks as the only main resource. There is no training course for teachers and so the teachers' book offers key guidance. The author's personal English teaching experience confirms Alsamadani's (2009, pp. 72-73) description of the procedures most English teachers adopt when teaching reading:

1. The teacher presents new vocabulary (normally at the beginning of the lesson), and often the structures used in the text. To explain grammar rules and vocabulary, teachers usually rely on the students' mother tongue.
2. Then students will be asked to read the text silently for a few minutes, during which time they are often asked to underline any difficult words, and prepare themselves to answer the teachers' questions. Some teachers write guided questions on the board, asking students to keep these questions in mind and look for the answers when reading silently (reading for purpose).
3. After that, the teacher moves on to the reading comprehension questions that accompany the text, and asks the students to answer these questions to judge their understanding. This is

normally done by either asking the students to answer silently in their books or by asking them to answer loudly to the class. Most of these questions are of low level and can be answered directly from the text.

4. The text is then read aloud either by the teacher or on a tape recording, and the students follow in their books.

5. Finally, the teacher goes through the comprehension questions that accompany the text, answering them with the students and making sure that all the students have found and written the correct answer.

6. If there is still any time remaining, the teachers ask individual students to read the text, or part of it, aloud.

It appears from the above process that one principal merit is that the students become reasonably familiar with what they are taught. However, the students do not practise enough reading, and there is no emphasis placed on reading strategies. In addition, based on the author's experience, many teachers fail to teach all the RTs included in the textbooks for several reasons; for example, large class sizes require teachers to spend additional time managing the students, answering their questions, and checking their answers. Another reason is the late delivery of textbooks to students; in some schools, students receive their textbooks two weeks or more after the start of the school term.

1.5. English language at university levels

During the last decade, the number of universities in the KSA has grown from seven to over thirty public and private universities, in response to increasing demand. Moreover, the number of freshman (or junior) students has increased by 479% over the last two decades (MoHE, 2013).

At all these universities, English is used at the preparatory level and it is the language used for teaching in many Majors, for example, medicine, engineering, business administration, and science. However, some subjects at university are taught entirely in Arabic, such as Arabic and Islamic studies. This heavy use of English language at university makes many students see English as the main tool that they need in order to succeed in their academic studies.

1.5.1. English at the preparatory level

The preparatory level in the KSA universities is part of the university curriculum, and all newly admitted students have to complete the preparatory year successfully before starting their undergraduate studies, as illustrated in Figure 1.1. The duration of the Bachelor's (BA) degree programme is a minimum 4 years (depending on the discipline) including the preparatory level, which is considered "Year 0". All students at the preparatory level are obliged to take English classes, regardless of whether they will later receive their education entirely in English or in Arabic.

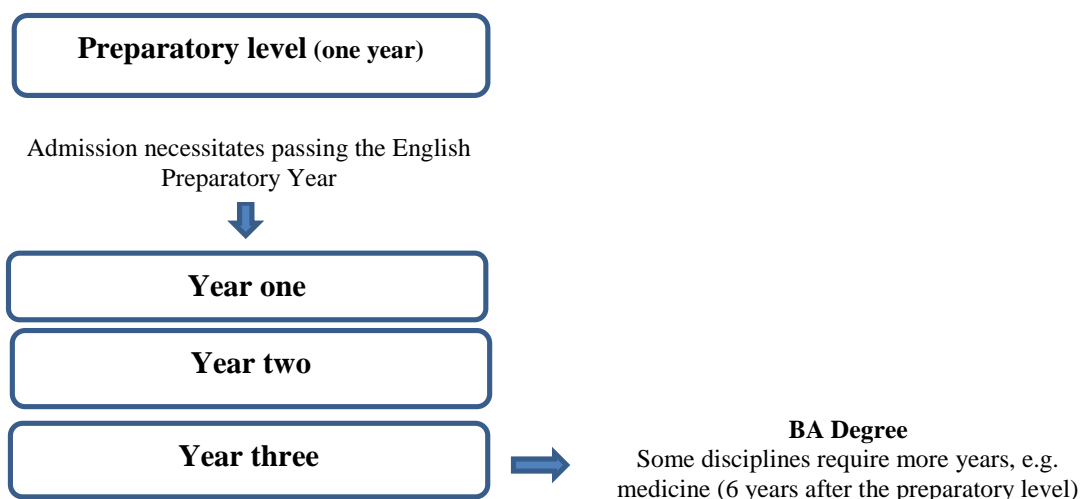


Figure 1.1: The Structure of the Degree Programme at NBU University.

The faculty overseeing the preparatory year in the NBU states a number of teaching objectives for the intensive English course. In this section, these objectives will be presented and discussed, especially those related to reading skills. (*Author's comments appear in italics.*)

- 1- Develop students' communication skills, to ensure they can function academically and socially.
- 2- Read various topics and academic texts, which allow students to pursue their undergraduate studies with English as the medium of instruction.

This objective is the most important one in terms of this study, as it aims to investigate whether the RTs at this level genuinely prepare students for their first year academic reading. This objective implies the texts read in the preparatory year should be academic ones. Even if that is the case, this raises an issue regarding whether students are adequately prepared for reading for their quite different majors when reading the same set of texts in preparatory year textbooks.

- 3- Write in various genres, such as academic essays, formal and informal letters, and emails.

- 4- Prepare students to achieve high scores in the international English tests such as IELTS, and TOEFL.

Based on personal communication with the teachers, none of the exams mentioned are required by or administered at the university.

The duration of the preparatory period is one academic year lasting 32 weeks, and is comprised of two terms. In each term, the students study about 18 hours per week. English is the main component of the programme and the students are required to study English for 12.5 hours each week. The students are grouped according to their potential disciplines in their undergraduate studies (if possible). All the students receive the same English instruction materials. Each group normally comprises 25 to 30 students. In this year, the students study various general subjects, such as Arabic and Islamic studies, in addition to an intensive English programme.

Students study English courses in the four language skills at the preparatory level, and the number of hours allocated to each skill is similar. Although the official preparatory level document (see appendix C) does not specify learning objectives per skill, the implied main aim of the preparatory level is to prepare the students for the next academic year, in order to reduce the gap in English knowledge and academic skills between secondary education and the level required for graduate studies.

The English textbook series used at preparatory level is determined independently by each university, based on its syllabus (if it has one). At NBU, the site of the study, there is no syllabus and the teachers stated that they use the textbook as the syllabus. The *Top Notch English* series designed by Saslow and Ascher (2006) is the English series used. This series comprises eight books distributed over four levels: Fundamentals, Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3.

Each level consists of two books and CDs, in addition to the teachers' book (for example, Fundamentals A and Fundamentals B), and each textbook contains about 6 units.

In this English course students start from a very basic level of English, and mainly study general English, covering general topics such as *shopping, family, and home*. There is not any English for specific purposes included in this year, nor any overtly academic English. English in this course is taught by offering integrated language skills; i.e. the activities in each lesson focuses on the four skills in addition to the grammar activities. Each unit in these textbooks relates to one topic.

The teaching staff are academically and professionally qualified to at least MA level, and some hold PhDs. There are a few English native speakers (NS) (two teachers at the time of data collection), and the majority of the teachers come from other Arab countries, India, and Pakistan.

Reading in the preparatory year is taught using the textbooks, and in each unit students are exposed to three or four RTs that vary in length from 39 to about 300 words (See Appendix D for RTs examples).

The majority of the teachers follow similar procedures to those followed by the secondary stage teachers (see section 1.6) when teaching reading lessons. However, some of the teachers cannot access the Arabic language; hence, they tend to use other strategies to explain the vocabulary through drawing, or sometimes asking their Arabic colleagues to translate the main vocabulary in the text into Arabic in case their students fail to understand. The English teachers at this level do not receive any ongoing training, but are given a teachers' book. The practices at the NBU are not necessarily the same as those at other universities in the KSA.

With regard to the assessment component, the students are expected to attend at least 80% of classes in order to be allowed to sit for a final exam. After they complete each level, students are required to sit for short exams to assess their progress. At the end of each term, for example after completing fundamentals level and level one in the first term, all the students sit a final exam. Students who pass the final exam the first term successfully (there is a pass rate of 50%) will move on to the next term. Students who fail must repeat the term, as there are no re-sits. A committee from the university's English language centre designs and marks all the examinations.

1.5.2. Reading English at the NBU (after the Preparatory level)

After completing the preparatory level successfully, students start their university disciplines. Some of these disciplines are taught entirely in the Arabic language (Arabic studies, Islamic studies, and management), so no English reading is required for those students. At the NBU, two colleges (engineering and medicine) and the English and translation department use English as the medium of instruction. In these English-medium disciplines, especially medicine and engineering, students need to study using textbooks similar to those used by native speakers.

Considering FYU level specifically, medicine and engineering students are expected to read subject textbooks selected by their teachers. In some cases, the students may have more than one reference book for each subject. There are no remedial English classes available to medical and engineering students after the first year or later as optional extras. However, medical students are taught a short course on medical terminology alongside their major subject. The course is taught by one of the subject teachers and its duration is five weeks, at two hours per week. The students are expected to read their textbooks without any assistance from their subject teacher.

Regarding the English and translation department, students in the first year continue to study speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in addition to other modules in Arabic, such as the

general teaching method [there is another course on teaching methods, which is taught entirely in English and at advanced levels], the history of Saudi Arabia and Educational Leadership and Management.

The majority of academic staff in these two colleges and the English and translation department come from different countries, and a few come from Saudi Arabia. Some of these non-Saudi teachers have access to the Arabic language, whereas others do not speak Arabic.

All first year students have to sit midterm exams, which account for 30%, and a final exam, which accounts for 60%; and the final 10% is awarded for attendance and classroom participation.

1.6. Study Rationale

The role of reading in students' studies at the NBU is of crucial importance to this study. Students come from Arabic medium secondary schools, and then suddenly encounter the demands of the tertiary education syllabus, where English is the medium of instruction. To bridge this gap, students need to pass a preparatory level course, which includes an intensive English course before commencing their studies. At university level, students are required to perform complex academic tasks and read materials concerning major subjects in their disciplines. Students also encounter different registers that may greatly differ from the reading materials they have become accustomed to previously.

At the preparatory level, students may be exposed to large amounts of reading in a limited time frame. The students may also be required to complete complex tasks related to what they have read. It is important to state here that this level is critical for students; if they fail to complete the

preparatory level, their start at university will be delayed. Therefore, it is essential to investigate whether the RTs offered at secondary level adequately prepare students for the reading demands at the preparatory level. In addition, since the aim of reading at preparatory level is to prepare students to read in their first year disciplines, it is also important to investigate the suitability of the RTs offered at this level to prepare the students to study in various disciplines at the university level.

Throughout the educational system a lot of time and money is spent at each stage in order to hopefully make the students well prepared to deal with the target language. Thus, it is necessary to determine whether there is a return in terms of value for money and time. Once the validity of reading materials is established, then other EFL contexts should also benefit, not only those in the KSA.

Other motivations for the current study, which relate to the Saudi context, are as follows. First, in 2013, remarkable changes took place in the Ministry of Education, directed at further developing the existing English series and offering a new English series [FHFSA (as mentioned above in Section 1.4.2.2)] to be adopted in some secondary public schools. Thus, the current study could provide a clear picture of how well the RTs in each English series prepare students for the next educational levels, and hence which would be the better choice in terms of extending it to widespread use. Second, the changes included adding two years (years four and year five) to the period of English instruction in SSs, which means an extra 96 hours of instructed input. This study could show whether this decision to increase English teaching hours is justified or not, after examining whether students who did not have the benefit of those extra years received sufficient input to fulfil their language needs at the target university or not. Although this study only focuses on RTs at the secondary, preparatory, and FYU levels, it might emerge that students require extra time in order to reach the level that enables them to

understand their academic RTs. So in that case the current study would support the increase in teaching English hours, as this is likely to afford better outcomes in terms of English proficiency level in the future.

Another important study rationale, based on the researcher's personal experience, is that, despite seven years of formal English language instruction at school, some teachers at the preparatory level still complain that students have a poor English reading proficiency level. Similarly, many university teachers across various disciplines complain about students' English level, stating that they are not ready for the huge amount of reading required for their Majors.

1.7. The significance of the study

This study aims to provide a significant contribution to educational research, assisting EFL English reading materials' designers teaching English reading as a foreign language in general, and the teaching of English reading in the KSA in particular.

The present study will make significant contributions to educational research as follows:

- a) The first contribution relates to how the RTs used at the secondary level and preparatory level are efficient to prepare EFL students to study at an English-medium university which has not been researched properly yet in EFL context.
- b) The study also constitutes a valuable follow-up to other important studies directly and indirectly related to English reading in Saudi contexts, as outlined below.

Al-Hazemi (1993) and Al-Bogami (1995) provided evidence that SSs were failing to produce learners who are able to meet the vocabulary threshold levels that would enable them to comprehend authentic texts. This study goes further by investigating the RTs and subject

textbooks used at university level to provide a clear picture of the vocabulary input that students are exposed to in comparison with what they need.

Al-Akloby (2001) investigated the reasons behind the low vocabulary level of SSs. The reasons (factors) put forward were grouped into three categories: 1) vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), 2) syllabus/teaching related factor, and 3) factors related to attitudes, motivation, classroom anxiety and parental encouragement. The second factor is the most relevant to our study, but the study findings were only based on the MoE 2000 word list that students are required to learn over a period of six years. The claim that there is low vocabulary input in English textbooks (as stated in Al-Akloby's study) might be better supported by an investigation of the entire vocabulary input from English textbooks at the secondary stage. The current study better represents the content of the English textbooks by examining the vocabulary of all RTs in these textbooks in depth. In addition, it considers not only the vocabulary, but also the readability, academic vocabulary, some grammatical features of RTs, RT topics, text length at the secondary stage, preparatory level reading, and the texts encountered by students in their first year, to give a clear picture of how the RTs vary across stages.

While Al-Arfaj (1996) and Alsamadani (2009), Alsubaie (2014) investigated reading difficulties and reading materials by distributing questionnaires to learners, the focus of the current study is on the suitability of the reading materials that students encounter, through collecting the perceptions of the audiences of these RTs (the students and the teachers), and analysing and comparing the RTs in the three successive levels.

Alsaif (2011) conducted a study to measure male students' vocabulary level in schools and English departments, and investigated the vocabulary input in the English textbooks. Although Alsaif's (2011) study was conducted quite recently, significant developments and changes have

since occurred in the field of teaching English in the KSA. For example, the old English series has been improved, and another English textbook series introduced by some secondary schools in the study context. In addition, at the time of Alsaif's study, English was taught from the 6th grade, whereas now students start studying English from the 4th grade.

- c) The current study not only uses a mixed methods approach by administering questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and analysing RTs, but it also follows this procedure across three successive levels of education in the KSA.
- d) The key findings for the current study can be used as a solid basis for conducting intervention studies to help improve teaching English reading at the secondary and university level.

With reference to the KSA English curriculum and reading materials, the current study is potentially significant because it:

- a) draws attention to the weaknesses and strengths of the RTs in each English series used at the secondary level in SSs in the KSA, and in terms of the readability level, the general vocabulary, the academic vocabulary level, the amount of reading, and the topics of RTs. This study will hopefully enable decision makers in the MoE to choose the right English series for use at the secondary stage.
- b) examines the gap, if any, between the RTs used at secondary level, preparatory level, and the reading given to students in the FYU level. This will hopefully assist in the development of reading materials for the secondary stage and the preparatory level to match the students' needs in the FYU level.

The current study may have the potential to inform English language and university subject teachers as follows:

- a) It might explain the difficulties faced by Saudi university students, if the RTs at each level vary greatly.
- b) It raises English teachers' awareness at the preparatory level, in relation to understanding the disciplinary differences that exist between various academic majors at university, and their impact on students' second language and academic reading. This might also provide useful insights for teachers working in similar EFL contexts. In such contexts, students generally struggle to meet the conflicting demands made on their academic reading relative to the different disciplines they belong to, in particular during the transition from foundation study to disciplinary study. As a result of the evidence collected for this research, teachers might become better equipped to mitigate the obstacles that students might encounter, leading to more successful learning outcomes.

1.8. Study Aims and Research Questions

The main aim of this study is to investigate the RTs that students are exposed to from the earliest level (secondary level) that claims to prepare the students for the target academic RTs in the first year of their university majors. Moreover, the RTs at the preparatory level will also be investigated in order to examine their suitability in preparing the students to read effectively in their first year disciplines.

In order to achieve the main aim of the study, the suitability of the RTs will be evaluated using three methods. First, the study analyses the RTs at each educational level and examining how the RTs at the lower levels help to prepare the students for the subsequent higher level. Second, it gathers and investigates students' perceptions at each educational level of the suitability of the RTs they are studying (secondary level, preparatory level) in preparing for the next educational

level (preparatory level, and FYU level), or what they have studied before (secondary level, preparatory level) in preparing for the current education level (preparatory level, FYU level). For example, secondary level learners will be asked about the suitability of the RTs at their level for preparing to the preparatory level, and the preparatory level students will be also asked about suitability of the RTs at the secondary level in preparing to the reading at the preparatory level, and also will be asked about the suitability of RTs at preparatory level in preparing for the FYU level. Meanwhile, first year students will be asked about the suitability of the RTs at the preparatory level in preparing them to deal with reading in their disciplinary studies. Third, the study provides teachers at each level with the chance to speak about the suitability of the RTs they teach, in terms of preparing the students for the next educational level.

Crucially, the research will investigate the experiences of FYU level students in three disciplines, medicine, engineering, and English and translation studies to obtain a clear picture of the nature of the RTs, and students' and teachers' perceptions in relation to three different academic text registers.

In particular, the study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What differences are there between English RTs in each English series at secondary level, at preparatory level, and in the first year subject class? [comparison features: general and academic vocabulary, readability (word length, and sentence length), academic grammatical features, length of the text and content)]. Do the earlier levels successfully prepare learners for later levels?
2. To what extent do Saudi secondary level students and their English teachers think that the RTs in the secondary English textbooks, EFSA, will prepare students for reading at the preparatory level? Why (not)?

3. To what extent do Saudi preparatory year students and their English teachers think that RTs in EFSA secondary English textbooks have prepared the students for their reading at the preparatory level? Why (not)?
4. To what extent do Saudi preparatory year students and their English teachers think that the RTs at the preparatory level will prepare students for the reading in their FYU level? Why (not)?
5. To what extent do Saudi FYU students and their teachers think that the RTs at the preparatory level have prepared the students to read English-medium textbooks in their subjects effectively? Why (not)?

1.9. Thesis Outline

There are six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter two presents the literature review, which outlines the nature of L2 reading and explains how written registers vary, comparing general English and academic registers. It also focuses on the relationship between reading comprehension and each factor within the focus of the study (vocabulary, readability, grammar, text length, and content prior-knowledge), to establish how to prepare students to deal with each aspect of academic reading. Chapter three presents the methodology for the current study, outlining the theoretical framework, offering full details about the study participants and location, and explaining the research paradigm, the mixed methods design with its detailed data collection and data analysis instruments and procedures, and finally, the ethical considerations. In Chapter four, the results and discussion related to the RT analysis are presented. In Chapter five, the students' and their teachers' perceptions of the RTs are presented and discussed. In the final chapter, the main findings of the study are reviewed and the corresponding implications and suggestions for further research put forward.

2 Chapter Two: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on relevant aspects of EFL reading texts (RTs) in English language textbooks and university subject textbooks, with special reference to differences between registers. This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section explains the nature of the reading process. The second section discusses the differences between different types of English language courses with specific reference to reading. In the third section the concept of students' readiness for university study will be discussed, with specific reference to preparedness for academic reading. The fourth section presents a review of some studies that have focused on differences between EFL/ESL reading materials and academic language. The fifth section deals with the effect of text-related factors on reading comprehension (RC) with specific focus on vocabulary, academic syntactic features, readability, text content, length and structures. Finally, in the sixth section two studies that are particularly relevant to the current study will be discussed.

2.2 The Nature of L2 reading

Basically, reading is a process of constructing meaning from a written text (e.g. Alderson, 2000; Gibbons, 1993; Koda, 2007; Urquhart & Weir, 1998). This process involves an interaction between the reader and the text (Alderson, 2000; Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Koda, 2005) to which the reader brings his/her background knowledge and uses the information in the text to construct the meaning. Thus, it is believed that the reading process is affected by various factors, although each factor may affect reading comprehension differently (e.g., Alderson, 2000;

Feng, 2011; Kendeou & Broek, 2007; Koda, 2005; Shin, 2002). These factors have been broadly classified in two main groups (Alderson, 2000). Firstly, there are reader related factors such as his/her language proficiency at all levels (in grammar, vocabulary, registers etc.) (Alderson, 2000), his/her reading strategies (Block, 1986; Carrell, 1989; Dreyer & Nel, 2003; Hosenfeld, 1977; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001; Jun Zhang, 2001), the reading process relied on (the bottom-up model (Gough, 1972), the top-down model (Goodman, 1967; Smith, 2012), and the interactive model (Carrell, 1983a, 1983b; Rumelhart, 1977; Stanovich, 1980), first language (L1) interference (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Grabe & Stoller, 2011), level of fluency (Klauda & Guthrie, 2008), background knowledge of content (Nassaji, 2003; Qian, 2002), and anxiety (Brantmeier, 2005; Saito, Horwitz & Garza, 1999; Sellers, 2000). Secondly, there are text-related factors which involve vocabulary (e.g. Nation, 2006), language structures or grammar (Grabe, 2005), different registers (e.g. Biber, 1988; Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Finegan, 1999), sentence and word length (e.g. Greenfield, 2004; Gunning, 2003), text length (e.g. Anderson, 2000), text content (Feng, 2011). This suggests that reading is a complex process that involves many skills. Therefore, many studies tend to focus on one or a few factors rather than all factors. This study aims to investigate the suitability of the RTs at lower educational levels for preparing the students to deal ultimately with academic specialised disciplinary texts. Hence the focus is on the second group of factors, especially the lexicogrammatical features and the texts' content and length.

2.3 Reading texts in General English (GE) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Courses

EFL RTs typically constitute a main component of EFL course, and often of EFL textbooks. In EFL countries, such as the KSA, there are two types of English course that students may

encounter at state schools and universities, which are GE or EAP. A GE course typically focuses on basic knowledge of English and the four skills. The content of the RTs in GE normally covers broad non-academic topics related to everyday life or interests such as sport, health, travel and so on. Since such courses are often given to learners who at the time have no specific purpose for learning English, the content of the RTs is also often designed or selected according to what the textbook writer thinks are the general interests of the students rather than any particular educational purpose (Hsu, 2009). All over the world, including the KSA context, this type of course is normally taught to students at school. This characterisation holds for international GE textbooks like Headway etc., but in fact we see later that in the KSA this is not entirely true as EFSA, used at secondary level, has a cultural basis for choice that is not the same as student interest.

In preparation for English-medium university level study, however, where the students meet the language utilized in disciplinary textbooks which contain specific academic linguistic features (Biber, 2006; Scarcella, 2003), students often receive EAP courses which could be English for general academic purposes (EGAP) and/or English for specific academic purposes courses (ESAP) (Blue, 1988) (see Figure 2.1).

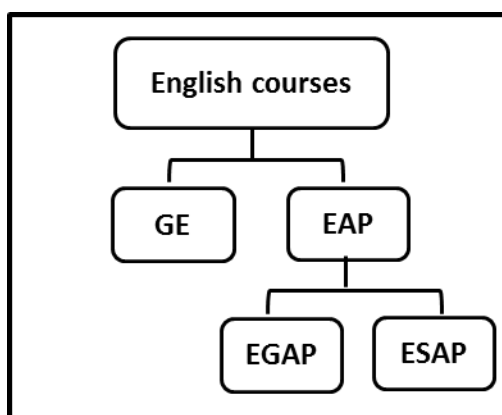


Figure 2.1: The types of English courses that are commonly employed in state schools and universities in the KSA context

The main aim of true EAP courses is to prepare learners for the English required in subject-matter classrooms (Stoller, 2001, p.209). They are commonly used at immediate pre-university level, such as pre-sessional or bridging courses for NNS students arriving to study at UK universities, and the preparatory year in the KSA. This type of course varies from one university to another as, according to Richards (2001), in designing an EAP course the students' needs, the course goals and the objectives of the institution should be taken into consideration. In addition, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001a) state that in EAP courses both the objectives and "potential difficulties" (p. 179) that students may encounter in dealing with those specific objectives should be considered. Therefore, researchers argue that a successful EAP course in one context or institution may not necessarily be the most appropriate EAP course in another context (Flowerdew & Peacock 2001a; Stoller, 2001).

There are various differences between EGAP and ESAP. According to Flowerdew and Peacock (2001b), an EGAP course is a 'wide-angle' course, targeting aspects of academic English which are common to most disciplines, while an ESAP course is a 'narrow-angle' course, targeting the academic English of a specific discipline, such as medicine. There are many researchers who support teaching EGAP (e.g. Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Spack, 1988; Widdowson, 1983). The advocates of EGAP courses do not deny that there is variation between texts in different disciplines, but they believe that there are substantial features (e.g. vocabulary and grammar) that are common to all the disciplines (e.g. Coxhead, 2000; Bloor & Bloor, 1986). With specific reference to RTs, in this type of course the RTs come from a mix of disciplines, and are accessible without detailed subject specific knowledge, and contain the academic features that may be common to most disciplines. A good example of a resource exploited these days on EGAP courses and by EGAP textbook writers is the Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000), which was compiled from a survey of texts across many disciplines.

An ESAP course, conversely, is closely related to a specific discipline (e.g. medicine) and designed for a specific subset of university learners (e.g. medical students). A number of researchers support the teaching of ESAP over EGAP (e.g. Hyland, 2002; Hyland and Tse, 2007) because they believe that different disciplines constitute different registers (register refers to a group of linguistic features that are commonly employed in specific situational contexts (Biber, 1988; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Martin, 1992)) which do not share many features (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Martin, 1992), and hence that exposing students to the actual language that is used in a particular field would best enable the students to deal successfully with reading materials in their field (Hyland, 2002). In an ESAP course, the RTs tend to be on specific topics or themes that are closely related to the one specific field and may contain technical terminology. For some researchers in the EFL context, ESAP is desirable even if the students are also or first studying EGAP (Alghamdi, 2013).

In the NBU the term EAP is employed officially at the preparatory level, and we feel teachers construe that as EGAP, although, as we already indicated in 1.5.2, the textbook used is not really an EAP textbook, but GE. We also cited, in 1.6, that we are aware of some dissatisfaction of teachers teaching subject majors in the following year with the English level of the students, which is part of the investigation in this research, at least with respect to the RTs used. According to Hyland (2002) unsatisfactory results that arise from any type of EAP course are “probably because of gaps in school curricula or the insufficient application of learners themselves” (p. 386). According to Hyland (2002, p.388),

weak students need to control core forms before getting on to specific, and presumably more difficult features of language ... [This argument is not] supported by research in second language acquisition. Students do not learn in this step-by-step fashion according to some externally imposed sequence. They acquire features of the language as they need

them, rather than incrementally in the order that teachers present them. Students may need to attend more to sentence-level features at lower proficiencies, and perhaps require remedial attention in some areas, but there is no need to ignore either discourse or discipline at any stage. (2002, p.388)

The current study therefore aims specifically to examine the RT element in courses at the three successive educational levels in the KSA, namely secondary, preparatory, and FYU level (three disciplines), in order to investigate how each level prepares students for the next level up to the point where the target language is encountered in subject specific academic RTs at the FYU level. Another way to state this would be as the issue of whether the RTs at these levels constitute a sensibly graded de facto reading syllabus so that students arrive 'ready' to cope with ESAP at the end. To our knowledge, nobody has previously set out to illuminate the details of this important three stage sequence in this way in any context.

2.4 Readiness for university, with specific reference to academic reading

The concept of 'readiness' or preparedness is used in a number of places in ELT. Indeed, there is a well-known construct of 'reading readiness' (e.g. Biemiller, 1974; McMahon, Richmond, & Reeves-Kazelskis, 1998; Razfar and Gutiérrez, 2013), but this is applied only to readiness to start to read and is mostly applied in the context of children first learning to read in L1. The readiness for reading which our study relates to is, however, primarily that of preparedness of EFL students to read English academic textbooks in their major subject at university. We have not found any references to this under the name of reading readiness but the general concept of readiness for university or college study is current. Conley (2007), for example, defined college readiness as "the level of preparation a student needs in order to enrol and succeed, without

remediation, in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfer to a baccalaureate program” (p. 5).

According to Conley’s criteria, almost no school leavers in the KSA context are ready for university, as almost all of them have to take an intensive English course at the preparatory level. This is due to the belief of the authorities that students are not at a sufficient level to be able to study at an English-medium university, as also supported by some studies (e.g. Al-Akloby, 2001, Al-saif, 2011). Put another way, there is a (correctly) perceived gap between the actual language ability of students who are eligible for university and the language ability expected of students who are ready for FYU level. According to Conley (2008), successful completion of secondary or high school is hugely different from university readiness and this very much applies in the KSA, where, given the examining system described in 1.5, students may successfully complete secondary school without gaining a satisfactory grade in English even in the local exams.

A very common means used to determine EFL students’ language readiness for English-medium university study is through international English tests such as IELTS or TOEFL. However, there is no agreement on the efficiency of these tests in predicting the students’ performance (e.g. for IELTS see Dooley & Oliver, 2002; Elder, 1993; Feast, 2002; Kerstjens & Nery, 2000; Woodrow, 2006). In the KSA the students are not required to take any such English proficiency test, e.g. with a required grade to be achieved as a prerequisite for acceptance onto an English-medium undergraduate program. Instead, it is believed that studying and completing the preparatory level successfully will prepare the students for the language used at FYU level, regardless of their knowledge of English on entry to the preparatory year.

According to Biber (2006), all students, even L1 students, may need to be prepared to deal with university tasks that require using academic language. One of the obvious tasks is understanding

academic texts, which is the main focus in this study. As we saw in 2.2, the difficulty of the text is a result of various factors that relate to both the text and individual reader. In other words, the same text can be easy for a person with greater prior knowledge or language proficiency and hard for a reader with less of these. Therefore, in order to prepare students in the KSA ultimately to read ESAP texts, not only do the students need to be equipped progressively with necessary L2 knowledge in areas such as vocabulary, structure (grammar), and content background knowledge, but also the texts need to be suitably graded so that they place progressively greater demands on the reader in such areas (which is our focus).

Learning English reading through formal instruction in an EFL context, specifically the KSA (See sections 1.4, 1.5 and 2.3), can be divided broadly into phases. Firstly, students learn to read GE, which is normally done in schools and preparatory level through reading instruction using RTs in their English textbooks. Secondly, they read ESAP in subject textbooks to learn the content of the RTs, as takes place at university level, where the students study their disciplines. According to Chase, Gibson and Carson (1994), academic reading is “the vehicle for gathering information and ideas” (p. 12). In this phase, however, the students do not just read for learning the content but, hopefully, through reading, they also learn more of the language as well (Krashen, 2004), which is supported by various studies in L2 reading (e.g. Dupuy & Krashen, 1993; Pitts, White, & Krashen, 1989; Webb & Chang, 2015). According to Grabe and Stoller (2002, p. 85), however, “there is little exploration in L2 reading research of the transition from learning-to-read to academic reading-to-learn”. The current study aims to add to the understanding of this area by investigating the appropriateness of the RTs at pre-university levels in helping to equip students who study them well with the necessary knowledge to be ready for academic reading at the FYU level.

Academic reading is the most crucial tool for academic learning and success (Adamson, 1993; Chase et al., 1994; Cheng, 1996; Christison & Krahne, 1986; Grabe, 1986; Jensen, 1986; Levine, Ferenz & Revez, 2000; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw & Rycik, 1999; Shelyakina, 2010). Hence it is most crucial for undergraduates to be prepared for the academic reading. It is not only that through this academic reading much of the required subject knowledge is transmitted, but FYU reading presents two further challenges compared with reading at earlier levels which, although outside the scope of our study, we will briefly mention: the associated tasks and the circumstances in which they are done.

First, reading and comprehending an academic text successfully at FYU level requires more than understanding basic knowledge from a text. In the academic context, the students not only need “to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately” (Grabe and Stoller, 2011. p. 3), but they also may need to go a step further, where they must manipulate the text according to the required academic reading tasks (Chase et al., 1994). They may need to identify main ideas, make logical inferences, connect different ideas, understand new concepts (IELTS, 1996; cited in Anderson 2000, p. 206). In addition, Grabe and Zhang (2013) and Shelyakina (2010) identified other common university reading tasks which are strongly connected to writing tasks, such as summarising information, note-taking or writing critical responses or long research articles (Shelyakina, 2010, p. 16). Second, many researchers further argue that disciplinary (ESAP) reading in an academic context is not like reading English language textbooks in an EGP or EGAP class, due to the circumstances in which it is done. In the EFL reading class, the students predominantly read under the supervision of the teacher in order to help them to improve their reading skills. Pre-reading activities may be used and the teacher is available during the reading. However, this is not the case for students in a real academic situation who are expected to read independently, usually out of class, without

assistance from teachers when they encounter difficulties in comprehending an academic text (Levine, Ferenz, & Reves, 2000; Ohata & Fukao, 2014).

Some studies (e.g. Al-Arfaj, 1993; Alsubaie, 2014; Dreyer & Nel, 2003; Shafie and Nayan, 2011; Shelyakina, 2010; Sidek, 2009) have shown that many EFL/ESL students entering FYU may face difficulties in reading and they may not yet be ready to meet the academic reading demands that are placed on them. However, almost none of these studies specifically investigated the suitability of the RTs that students encountered at pre-university level or analysed these RTs. Some opinion-based studies have, however, been conducted into students' preparedness for the academic language met at university level after completing preparatory English programmes (Christison & Krahnke, 1986; Freahat, 2014 (see 2.6.6.2); Ostler, 1980; Smoke, 1988). Ostler (1980) for example conducted a questionnaire study with 133 advanced ESL learners in the American Language Institute of the University of Southern California. All the participants studied in ESL classes alongside rather than before core university classes (graduate and undergraduate). This study evaluated whether these ESL classes provided the students with the necessary academic skills, including reading, that they needed in their academic study after complaints from many teachers that the real students' needs were not being dealt with. The results revealed that the strongest students' need was for reading the textbooks, at 90%. The researcher concluded that this English programme was not helpful to meet the students' greatest need as the students were only studying general ESL reading skills (similar to our context).

Christison and Krahnke (1986) studied 80 non-native graduate (21%) and undergraduate (71%) students enrolled at American universities after completing an intensive English programme. The researchers were interested in preparedness and in which types of language skills former ESL students used the most in their academic work and what skills they viewed as easy or

difficult. The results showed that the majority of the students believed that their ESL intensive programs were “good general preparation for academic work,” but not so helpful in preparing for specific academic skills, such as reading academic texts and listening to lectures (Christison & Krahne, 1986, p. 72).

Similarly, Smoke (1988) investigated the academic preparedness of 62 ESL university students after taking ESL reading and writing courses. The results again showed that the students found the ESL courses were helpful in improving their English language; however, 79% of them felt they were still not prepared to deal with academic study at university, and 92% of the students encountered difficulty in understanding their textbooks.

More recently, Kondiyenko (2010) investigated the preparedness for academic reading of 40 ESL students who had completed an intensive English program of two or three semesters in the English Language Center (ELC) at Brigham Young University and started their university courses. The results of the questionnaires and interviews used in the study showed that 63% of the students reported that they felt prepared for the academic university work, 31% reported being “somewhat prepared”, and only 6% reported being unprepared. However, the researcher found that 80% of the participants encountered difficulties in reading academic texts, particularly in understanding unfamiliar academic vocabulary in their specialised textbooks, and dealing with the great amount of reading in limited time.

From the above we see that students can provide valuable information about their readiness for academic reading, though it needs to be complemented by analysis of the texts themselves. Indeed, according to Nunan (1988), the learners' views are important in developing a curriculum as many researchers suggest that learners perform better when they feel they want to learn rather than have to learn (e.g. Brindley, 1989; Graves, 2000; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Johns, 1991;

Jordan, 1997; Richards, 1990; Richterich & Chancerel, 1980; Savage & Storer, 2000; Stern, 1992; Young, 2000). Thus, our study, along with analysing the RTs themselves, also aims to investigate the students' views regarding the suitability of the RTs that they have studied in preparation for the next educational level. All the above studies are different, however, from the current study in various ways. First, all those studies were conducted in an English native speaker context (i.e. United States), which is clearly different from EFL contexts such as the KSA. Second, these studies included students at different educational levels (e.g. undergraduate, postgraduate) who come from a variety of different backgrounds, without paying attention to the amount of English study in their home countries, or indeed the English RTs encountered there. By contrast, the current study targets a homogenous population of participants whose prior English reading exposure can be readily taken into account. Third, the current study does not only rely on the students' perspectives, but also the teachers' perspectives and the analysis of the RTs themselves at the three most relevant successive levels. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, only one study in an EFL context investigated the suitability of the RTs at a lower educational level in preparing students for academic reading at the FYU level (Freahat, 2014), but it did not go back to secondary level as we do. The only study to compare ESL RTs with academic authentic texts is Miller (2011). These studies will be reviewed in detail later (section 2.6).

Prior to the issue of whether immediately pre-university preparatory or pre-sessional English courses actually make students ready for English-medium academic study lies the issue of whether school English courses prepare learners for the immediate pre-university courses. To this effect, we also investigate the RTs used in the secondary school level, as EFL research on this transition in the literature is very thin on the ground; the only EFL study that can be quoted here is Freahat (2014).

In order to minimise the difficulties that students may encounter at university level in reading their academic texts, students clearly need to begin to be exposed to this sort of language (academic registers) from some time prior to starting university level (Biber, 2006). This idea is consistent with many ELT researchers who argue that the content of teaching, whether it is only the textbooks used (as in the KSA) or not, should serve the objectives which need to be achieved based on the students' needs, (e.g. reading academic language) (e.g. Krashen and Terrell, 1983; Jordan, 1997; Richard, 2013). Applying this to the KSA context with specific reference to English reading, one of the official aims of teaching English at secondary level is in fact to prepare the students for academic reading (see 1.4.1), so we could say that the RTs at secondary level should prepare the student for the reading at preparatory level, which in turn aims to prepare the students for FYU level reading demands (see 1.5.1).

The current study investigates RTs which were of course designed or selected by three different agencies at successive educational levels: the MoE at secondary level, the university English preparatory Deanship at preparatory level, and the university subject departments/colleges at FYU level. Nevertheless, consistent with fundamental ideas about syllabus grading, we would ideally hope not to find large gaps in demand between the RTs at the three levels, nor instances of higher level texts being less demanding than lower level texts (where demand refers both to difficulty of comprehension and how much new language there is to learn). Rather it is more expected to see the reading materials graded progressively in sequence from easy to difficult, as suggested by many ELT researchers (e.g. Richards, 2013; Sheldon, 1988). If large gaps or reversals are found between the reading materials at one level and those at the next educational level, this would likely indicate that students may not arrive prepared at FYU level and may not feel ready for the reading materials they encounter there.

This may also be conceptualized within the notion of “comprehensible input” (Krashen, 1981) as a crucial element in acquiring language. According to Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis, language acquisition will only occur if the input such as a RT is one step beyond the students' current level of comprehension ($i+1$) (where i refers to the student's prior knowledge including target language knowledge, and 1 is the new knowledge), not if it is less challenging due to comprehension being too easy as nothing is new (i.e. $i+0$ or $i-1$) or too challenging, due to low comprehension/too much new language (e.g. $i+2$ or $i+4$).

2.5 EFL /ESL textbooks and reading texts vs. authentic academic language

Some studies have shown great differences in the lexico-grammatical features (vocabulary and syntactic features) between academic text as a register and other registers (e.g. newspaper, fiction, speech), which might be considered a valuable source for the examination of EFL/ESL RTs (Biber, 1988; Biber et al., 1999;). Other studies also found differences in terms of lexico-grammatical features within registers, such as between university textbooks and research articles (Conrad, 1996). Thus, due to these differences between registers, researchers stress the importance of employing register-specific instruction in L2 contexts (e.g., Coxhead & Byrd, 2007). Differences between the RTs in EFL language textbooks (even EAP ones) and those in university subject textbooks may be expected. However, there is still a possibility that the materials designers of EAP textbooks are aware of these differences and may select RTs from sources that are not very different from the academic register.

In the last two decades, a number of studies have compared the language used in ESL textbooks with the language found in authentic academic language such as subject textbooks, which is considered an important target register for many ESL/EFL learners. Although these studies were

in the field of grammar and writing (Barbieri & Eckhardt, 2007; Hyland, 1994), they notably found that ESL textbooks are inappropriate in exposing L2 students to the structures that are used in the real target language.

Very few studies have, in fact, investigated ESL/EFL RTs themselves. Older accounts focus instead on the lay-out of the reading textbook or the reading activities included (e.g. Hamp-Lyons, 1982, who reviewed seven EAP reading textbooks). More recent studies do focus on the linguistic features of the texts, but do not necessarily compare the RTs in the textbooks with target language academic texts: Crossley, Louwerse, and McCarthy (2007), for instance, compare between simplified texts taken from ESL textbooks and authentic texts. To the best of my knowledge, the only study that compares the RTs that are taught to ESL students with the academic texts that they will encounter in their university studies is Miller's (2011), which will be reviewed in section (3.6.7.1); he found great differences between the ESL RTs and the texts of the university subject textbooks.

According to Biber, Conrad, Byrd and Hel (2002), little research has paid attention to university subject textbooks. Thus, they stress the importance of a study that compares English textbooks used in pre-sessional or preparatory courses and the university specialist subject textbooks in terms of linguistic features, similar to the current study, for two reasons. First, the university subject textbooks are considered the main resource that university students interact with. Second, they emphasize that “practice materials need to integrate patterns of language forms that are typically used for particular functions at the university” (Ibid, p. 42).

From the above brief review of the studies which compare English language textbooks and authentic academic language, a number of issues were revealed. First, there seems to be a discrepancy between the language used in EAP English language textbooks and what real

academic language is like. Second, only one study has compared English RTs for NNS that are commonly used in language preparation courses in American universities with academic subject texts in university textbooks in terms of their lexico-grammatical features, and that was an ESL study in the United States. There has been no such study conducted either in an EFL context or specifically in the KSA. This is a most crucial area since great differences between the RTs in the English language textbooks used for preparation and the university subject textbooks would increase the possibility that students may struggle to read their university textbooks.

2.6 Text-related Factors in relation to reading comprehension and learning from reading

As explained earlier in Section 2.4, preparing the students to deal with academic reading requires sufficient text input, provided starting from secondary school onwards, with suitable grading of texts with respect to the different aspects of texts which affect reading comprehension. Such input is a prerequisite for learners to be ready for academic reading in the FYU but of course does not guarantee it unless the students have actually read the texts and learnt from them. Due to the space and time limit, in this study, only what we consider to be the most important text related factors will be examined in order to investigate the suitability of the RTs at the lower educational levels in preparing for academic reading at FYU level. These features are general vocabulary, academic vocabulary, readability index, word and sentence length, selected syntactic academic features, text length, and the content. In the following sections each of these elements will be discussed in detail in relation to reading comprehension.

2.6.1 Vocabulary and RC

A sufficient knowledge of the meanings of the words that appear in a text greatly influences the readers' level of RC of that text, making it easy or difficult for that reader. According to Wilkins

(1972, p. 111), "without grammar very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". Applying this to reading, if you know the words but your grammar is inadequate, you may understand something of what a text is about. By contrast, if you know the grammar of the language but the vocabulary is not available, you would not be able to understand anything from a text. According to Laufer and Hill (2000), inadequate vocabulary knowledge of EFL learners relative to the vocabulary in a RT makes them pause frequently during their reading in order to ascertain the meaning of the unknown words (whether from guessing, using a dictionary or asking someone), and these interruptions lead to poor RC.

It has in fact long been recognized that reading comprehension has a strong relationship with vocabulary knowledge (Baleghizadeh & Golbin, 2010; Grabe, 2009; Koda, 2005; Nation, 1990; Urquhart & Weir, 1998). A number of the correlation based studies in L2 reading have provided evidence of a close relationship between RC and vocabulary knowledge among L2 learners at different educational levels, such as Laufer's (1992) study at university level, and Stahr's (2008) study at secondary level in an EFL context. For this reason, vocabulary knowledge is seen as one of the best predictors of reading ability, including reading success in a second language (e.g., Qian, 2002; Hazenberg & Hulstijn, 1996; Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Hu & Nation, 2000; Laufer, 1992; Nation, 2001; Read, 2000).

Although many researchers look at this issue from the point of view of the learner's knowledge, in the context of our study we may point out that it may also be said to be the choice of vocabulary in a text, relative to the vocabulary knowledge of the reader, which is fundamental to RC of that text, and the development of reading ability.

In the KSA context, to the researcher's knowledge, there are only two studies that investigated reading difficulties, one at secondary level (Al-Arfaj, 1996) and the other at English major

university level (Al-Subie, 2014). Both studies found that vocabulary is the biggest problem that affects the students' RC. However, these studies did not investigate the vocabulary of the RTs that students received. The current study will therefore compare the RTs at the secondary, preparatory, and FYU level, so as to ascertain whether the vocabulary knowledge demand of the texts is excessive relative to the likely knowledge of the students at each stage, and whether large differences in vocabulary demand between the RTs at these educational levels could create reading difficulties, which means the students may move on unprepared for the reading demands at a higher level. The current study is the only study we know that investigates the RTs that students are exposed to, not only at one educational level but at three successive levels.

Researchers have also raised important fundamental questions about vocabulary such as: How many words are there in English, how many words do native speakers know, and how many words are needed to do the things a language user needs to do? (Nation & Waring, 1997).

Regarding the first two questions, there is no absolute answer but research has revealed that the English language contains from around 88,000 (Nagy & Anderson, 1984) to 114,000 (Goulden, Nation, & Read, 1990) word-families (see 1.6.1.1). However, fewer are used in daily life (Nation 2006, p.59). Other research shows that the vocabulary knowledge of native speakers of English is estimated to grow by around 1000 word-families per year during the early years (D'Anna et al., 1991; Goulden et al., 1990). Another study estimated the annual growth to be about 2,000-3,000 word-families (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). English RTs for native speaker children used in school, then, are often graded to match this kind of increase in reader's vocabulary size (see 2.4). In addition, it is suggested that the vocabulary size of the NS university graduate is around 20,000 word-families (; Milton 2010; Nation 2006), which gives some idea of how many words may be needed to deal with university level academic reading.

A few studies have investigated Saudi learners' vocabulary knowledge (Al-Bogami, 1995; Al-Hazemi, 1993; Al-Masrai & Milton, 2012; Al-Saif, 2011;). The first three investigated the vocabulary knowledge of Saudi secondary school leavers and found very low vocabulary knowledge. Al-Hazemi (1993) found that the average vocabulary knowledge of the students was around 1000 words (range 800 to 2000 words). Both Al-Bogami (1995) and Al-Saif (2011) confirmed Al-Hazemi's findings and found that Saudi secondary learners scored very disappointingly in vocabulary size tests. With regards to the vocabulary size of Saudi EFL students at the university level, according to Al-Masrai and Milton (2012), learners scored, on average, between 1650 and 3000 words in English in the first year of university. By the time they graduated, their vocabulary knowledge had increased to, on average, between about 3000 and 5000 words in English. It is important to mention, however, that participants in his study were English majors who normally show more interest in English language than other students, and this result may not reflect other students in other disciplines. On the other hand, all these figures may be under-estimates as they are based on tests that were not based on the words that the students had actually been exposed to but the most frequent words in NS English.

Clearly, it is impossible to expect EFL learners to learn all the English vocabulary or as much as English native speakers know. Thus, a more reasonable goal for EFL learners, and more relevant to our study, is the third question: how many words are needed to do the things a language user needs to do? This for us, as already indicated, equates with what texts an EFL user needs to be able to read and comprehend, and hence what vocabulary needs to be known. In our context, these texts are all determined by the authorities, as described in Chapter 1, and our study will closely examine what the vocabulary demands are of the texts required to be read at each educational level, and whether it is feasible for Saudi learners to learn vocabulary at a rate to match that.

2.6.1.1 What is a word?

Since this thesis aims to investigate the vocabulary input and demand of RTs, it is crucial first to clarify recent technical definitions of word-like entities. In vocabulary research, researchers divide the concept of word into at least four different kinds of unit, so as to make discussion and findings of vocabulary research unambiguous and more usable. According to Milton (2009, p. 7) the term *word* is used, “presumably, for ease and convenience, when we are really referring to some very specialist definitions of the term such as types, tokens, lemmas, and word families”. Crucially, there are many ways to decide how to count words in vocabulary research, depending on whether counting is based on tokens, types, lemmata or families. Understanding these terms will decrease the ambiguity.

Counting based on word-tokens refers to all running words in a written text regardless of repetition of the same or related words. For example, in the sentence *The Holy month in Islam is Ramadan, which is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar*, we have 16 tokens. However, counting based on word-types refers to the total number of different words in any written texts, which in the previous sentence is 11 types, since *in*, *the*, *is* and *month* are repeated.

The term lemma refers to the headword and its inflections. So when you count based on lemmata, all words inflected from the same base, and of the same part of speech, would be considered one word (Nation, 2001). For example, the word *teach* is the lemma for *teaches*, *taught*, and *teaching*, but not *teacher* because the suffix *er* changes the word *teach* from verb into noun and is not considered an inflection. Irregular instances like *am*, *is*, *were* also count as one lemma. Finally, the word family contains a headword, and its “closely related derived forms” as well as all its inflected forms (Nation, 2001, p. 8). Thus the word *teach*, and all the other forms including *teachers* would be considered one word family, as would *Islam* and *Islamic* in

our example sentence. Pedagogically, the units taught and learnt are normally imagined to be at the very least types and very likely lemmata (which are the standard units in dictionary headwords), though increasingly there is a view that teaching/learning a member of a family readily gives access to the whole family (Nation, 2001).

2.6.1.2 Kinds of vocabulary

English vocabulary may be classified into four categories: (1) high-frequency or general service vocabulary, (2) academic vocabulary (AV), (3) technical vocabulary (TV) and (4) low-frequency vocabulary (Nation, 2001). High-frequency words (families) are commonly picked on as the initial main requirement for learners to learn. These are words that are commonly used in all types of texts, and the most popular list of these for many years was West's (1953) General Service List of English Words (GSL), now considered out of date and succeeded by lists of the commonest words in the British National Corpus (BNC) (see 2.6.1.2.1). The GSL covers the 2000 most frequent word-families of English (3,372 word-types), which account for around 80% of the running words in authentic non-specialised texts (Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Nation & Kyongho, 1995). AV refers to the words that commonly occur across academic texts of different disciplines, but are neither restricted to specific disciplines nor also very common in GE texts. One of the popular lists of such words is the Academic Word List (AWL) collected by Coxhead (2000). This list will be discussed in section 2.6.1.2.2. TV is vocabulary restricted in use to a specialized field and is considerably different from subject to subject; often it requires knowledge of the concepts of the field to be understood and is often termed terminology or jargon. These words account for almost 5% of the running words in an authentic specialised text and each subject has roughly 1,000 of such word-families (Nation, 2001). Finally, the low-frequency words are rarely used words other than the above, such as words that are in the process of falling out of use.

2.6.1.2.1 Frequency word lists based on the BNC

A very influential word frequency list is the word-families list that was derived by Nation (2006) from the most frequent words in the British National Corpus (BNC), which consists of 100,000,000 running words of English with 90% of the total running words taken from written sources, and 10% from spoken sources (British National Corpus, 2009). As can be seen in Table 2.1, it contains 14 lists, each list consisting of a thousand word-families but varying in the number of word-types. It is noticeable that the most frequent families also tend to be the largest in numbers of member types.

Table 2.1: The number of the most frequent word families and types in each frequency band based on the BNC (cited from Nation, 2006, p. 65).

Number of types (family members) and families in each 1,000 word-family list			
BASEWRD type	Number	BASEWRD family	Number
1.txt	6,019	1.txt	1,000
2.txt	5,527	2.txt	1,000
3.txt	4,591	3.txt	1,004
4.txt	4,308	4.txt	1,000
5.txt	3,988	5.txt	1,000
6.txt	3,582	6.txt	1,000
7.txt	3,421	7.txt	1,000
8.txt	3,224	8.txt	1,000
9.txt	3,053	9.txt	1,000
10.txt	2,876	10.txt	1,000
11.txt	2,808	11.txt	1,000
12.txt	2,676	12.txt	1,000
13.txt	2,391	13.txt	1,000
14.txt	2,080	14.txt	1,000

For many researchers (e.g. Milton, 2009; Nation, 2001), it seems more practical for learners to learn first the most important words, and the most frequent words are often taken to be the most essential to be learned as they are more likely to be encountered by the learners, regardless of the type or difficulty of the text being read, so can be argued to be the most universally important. As Schmitt (2000: 137) claims, “The learning of these basic words cannot be left to chance, but should be taught as quickly as possible, because they open [...] the door of further learning”. According to Nation (2001), the 2000 most frequent word-families cover around 80%

of the running words in a text. Texts in graded reading programs and some international textbooks (e.g. the Cobuild English Course) strictly progress starting from frequent vocabulary and then introducing words from successively less frequent bands. We will be checking to see if that is true, across educational levels, of the texts investigated in our study. Given the desirability of learners mastering the most frequent 2000 word-families of English first, we will be checking the texts in the study at each level to ascertain how many occur and what percent of running words of texts they make up. For instance in the school level texts, we would expect them to make up a high proportion of words, both to enable the students to understand the texts without too much difficulty and to provide them with the sort of vocabulary they need to be mastering at that level. However, at preparatory level, texts would be expected to contain more academic vocabulary and even some technical vocabulary, which would typically be outside the 2000 most frequent families.

2.6.1.2.2 The Academic word lists

Currently, there are two well established academic words lists: first, the Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000), the second and the most recent one is the Academic Vocabulary List (AVL) (Gardner and Davies, 2014).

The widely used AWL was designed by Coxhead (2000). This list consists of 570 most frequent academic word-families (3100 word-types) that are frequent in a 3.5 million token corpus of academic written texts that are published in New Zealand in different disciplines (Law, Arts, Commerce, and Science), but not also frequent in GE. The AWL covers about 8.5 - 10% of the total running words in authentic academic written texts (Nation & Coxhead, 2001). In addition, the text coverage of this list in non-academic texts is around 4% in newspaper register, and around 2% in novel texts (Chung & Nation, 2003). Therefore, Nation (2001) argues regarding

the AWL that “any time spent learning it is time well spent” (p. 196). For many researchers the AWL is crucial for understanding L2 academic reading (Coxhead, 2000; Nation & Coxhead, 2001), and it is advocated that L2 English learners at university level be introduced to the AWL when they are familiar with the most frequent 2,000 general service words in English, e.g. in pre-sessional or preparatory EGAP courses (Kim, 2006; Laufer, 2005; Nation, 2001).

Indeed, many studies have shown the importance of the AWL in academic texts of specific fields. For example, in medicine, Chen & Ge (2007) reported that the AWL covers 10.6% of the running words in medicine articles. In addition, Cobb and Horst (2004) found that the AWL covers around 6.72% in a small sample of medicine texts. Chung & Nation (2003) also reported that the AWL covers 8.6% and 17.4% in the anatomy and applied linguistics fields, respectively. In addition, Hyland and Tse (2007) reported that the AWL covers 11.3% of their engineering corpus. Therefore, it is suggested that the AWL is worth learning by students with academic goals directly after the 2000 most frequent words, rather than moving to the third thousand most frequent words band (Nation, 2006, p. 79). In this study we will therefore examine the coverage of the AWL of the RTs at the three educational levels. In addition, we will also investigate progression in the number of AWL families that occur in the RTs over the three educational levels. In the context of the study, we would expect texts that are in a true EGAP course preparing students for FYU reading, such as the preparatory year course in our context, to contain greater amounts of academic texts than GE texts at the secondary level.

The AWL is not without criticism and the strongest one is stated by Hyland and Tse (2007), who claim that the AWL disregarded an important issue that words do not behave phraseologically and semantically in the same way across different disciplines. In other words, many words in the AWL co-occur with different other words in different disciplines and carry a different meaning. Thus, it is claimed as misleading to regard a word in the AWL as really the

same word in the different disciplinary texts where it occurs. For example, the word *attitude* in the education field is used for *the way you think and feel about someone or something* (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2015) whereas in medicine it could mean *the arrangement of the parts of a body or figure: posture* (The Free Dictionary's Medical dictionary, 2015). This, however, is a feature of any list of words which claims to isolate the most frequent or important academic words across many disciplines, including also the AVL. Furthermore it is only really a criticism if the claim has been made that the meanings of words do not vary (so the learning burden is just one meaning per word). However, from the start Coxhead explicitly did not make that claim (Coxhead, 2000: p229).

A related criticism of the AVL concerns the way that it is constructed which is based on the word family. Gardner and Davies (2014) explain the weakness of this way of grouping as not all the word members of the word family may share a similar meaning to the head word. For example, the meaning of the head word *react* may share a core meaning with other family members such as *reacts*, *reacted*, *reacting*, *reaction* and *reactions* but other members of the family have different meaning such as *reactor*, *reactivate*, and *reactionary*. This way of constructing an academic word list (based on the word family) does not reflect the new meanings that arise due to the derivation process such as in *react* and *reactor*. So once again, there is more to learn than one basic meaning per family. Here Coxhead is less cautious and claims that learning derived words "does not require much more effort by learners if they know the base word" and the rules of word formation (op. cit. p218).

The AVL consists of 3000 most frequent academic words (lemmas) extracted from a 120 million token corpus of academic written texts that is published in United States, which is nearly 35 times larger than the AVL corpus. The text materials were collected in almost equal size from nine disciplines which are Education, History, Humanities, Social science, (Philosophy,

religion, psychology), Law and political science, Medicine and health, Business and finance.

The largest parts of the corpus (around 85 Million tokens) are taken from the academic texts in COCA corpus and the rest collected from academically oriented magazines (Gardner & Davies, 2014). The AVL unlike the AWL pays more attention to all meanings of derivational forms of one word family such as in *react* and *reactor*, since these would be listed as separate lemmata. However, the AVL does not take polysemy into account.

In addition, Unlike the AWL, the most high frequency words are not excluded in the AVL. Gardner and Davies (2014) tried to eliminate the words that are frequent in the non-academic texts by using the frequency ratio (1.5 ratio) which means the frequency of the words (lemmata) in AVL should be at least 50% higher in the academic corpus than in the non-academic portion of COCA (per million words). However, this method does not ensure that the word is essentially a high frequent one in academic English for which it is also required to use a measure of minimum frequency in academic texts, similar to Coxhead's (2000) method. Due to this decision, the AVL shows higher coverage than the AWL in non-academic texts such as newspapers as well as academic ones (cf. Gardner & Davies, 2014).

In this study we used the AWL for several reasons. First, during the time when we were collecting and analyzing the data of our study, the AVL was not published and available to be used. Second, in this study we analyze the vocabulary level of the RTs, trying to separate general from academic vocabulary. This is achieved better by the AWL since the AVL does not distinguish so clearly between high frequency academic and non-academic words so would involve more duplication between the AVL and the general high frequency words. Third, the corpus used for AVL mainly consists of academic journals and magazines whereas AWL contains a greater portion of university textbooks which are the main focus in our study. Finally, AVL has an American English slant whereas the AWL has greater UK English basis which suits

more our corpora as most of the English series used at pre-university level are designed and published by British-based companies.

2.6.1.2.3 Technical vocabulary (TV)

As explained earlier, TV is subject related vocabulary which occurs in a specialist discipline. Therefore, it is considered as part of subject knowledge (Chung and Nation, 2004). TV is also called "specialised lexis" (Baker, 1988), "technical terms" (Huizhong, 1986), "technical words" (Farrell, 1990) and "terminological units" (Desmet & Boutayeb, 1994), so all these terms in the current study refer to TV. According to Nation (2001), TV covers around 5% of the tokens in authentic specialised texts. Thus, inadequate knowledge of TV may hinder first year students' RC when they read their specialised textbooks.

There is no doubt that in preparing EFL students well to read in a specific discipline, the TV should be given some attention. In the Saudi context, such attention would be expected to be paid at the preparatory level, via an ESAP component in the course. However, since we know from Chapter one that the same textbook is applied to all students at this level regardless of their potential major, and that students are not separated into classes based on their intended major, we already know that that this is unlikely to be the case in our context. Therefore, this study does not aim to investigate medical TV and engineering TV in the RTs directly, but will rely on the students' and teachers' perceptions of this issue as well as on the differences and similarities between the topics that students encounter at the pre-FYU level, as Bedared and Chi (1992) pointed out that vocabulary knowledge is related to topic knowledge (see 2.6.4). In other words, if the students encountered reading topics that are closely related to their disciplines, this would indicate that students are more likely to meet some of the TV in their discipline.

Finally, it is crucial to mention that the importance of high frequency words does not indicate that the lowest frequency words are not important or needed since on occasion they may carry the thematic content of texts (Milton, 2009), for example when they cannot be substituted by more frequent words with similar meaning (López-Jiménez 2010). In our study the ESP texts read by FYU students might well contain discipline specific technical terms which are rare in relation to English as a whole, but crucial for understanding the topic of a textbook text.

2.6.1.3 The relationship between RC, lexical coverage of texts, and knowledge of high frequency words and the AWL

We have mentioned that researchers have found that knowing a certain number of words (often families) means that a certain percentage of running words of a text of a certain type will be (on average) understood. This is termed 'coverage' of a text (Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010, p.16), and leads immediately to the important question of how much vocabulary coverage of a text is needed in order for satisfactory RC of the text to occur (and for some unknown vocabulary still to be available for possible learning so as to prepare for future, more demanding, texts). That in turn leads to the question of how many words need to be known in order to attain the optimum level of coverage for the kind of texts that the reader needs to read. That is often talked of in terms of the 'threshold' vocabulary size, where vocabulary size is defined as “words whose meaning is so familiar to a person that they can be understood out of context” (Ibid, 2010). In our study it will be important at each level to ascertain the vocabulary size needed to understand the texts of that level successfully, so as to judge if such a size could plausibly be reached by the students prior to that time. We also consider whether the amount of vocabulary in the texts at that level is relevant to attaining the threshold for suitable coverage of texts at the next level. All these questions need to be pursued in order to fully evaluate the suitability of the texts in the study.

The relationship between lexical coverage and RC has been addressed by many researchers. Firstly, Laufer (1989) suggests that 95% of lexical text coverage can provide adequate L2 RC. In her study, 100 non-native English students who enrolled in an EAP course took an RC test in which they were asked to underline the unknown words they encountered in an academic text in addition to answering the RC questions. The results revealed that at 95% coverage there were significantly more students who scored 55 (the RC pass mark) or above.

Later, Hu and Nation (2000) conducted an experimental study to investigate the relationship between RC and lexical coverage. They arranged for four groups to experience different degrees of coverage (80%, 90%, 95%, and 100%) through omitting some of the text words for the below 100% groups. They concluded that 98% is the lexical coverage required for adequate RC of fiction texts. In relation to the differences between the two figures, 95% and 98%, which were suggested by Laufer (1989) and Hu and Nation (2000), respectively, Nation (2001) commented by saying:

The probabilistic threshold is 98%. With this coverage almost all learners have a chance of gaining adequate comprehension. If, instead of adequate comprehension, a standard of minimally acceptable comprehension is applied (as Laufer did in her study), then 95% coverage is likely to be the probabilistic threshold (p. 147).

Recently, Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010) also suggest two lexical coverage thresholds in their study: 95% for minimal and 98% for optimal comprehension. These figures were also supported by Schmitt, Grabe, and Jiang (2011) in their study. In this current study, 95% is used as a basis: this is because it seems to be a more feasible goal for EFL students, especially for the secondary and preparatory level students, as they are still studying English language rather than studying their subjects in English. Therefore, if students attain that level of coverage, it is seen

that the remaining 5% of words in the entire texts are candidates for learning so as to be ready for the next level, which means one unknown word in each twenty words, and these words may be tolerated before they interfere with RC. Nevertheless, in this study we will report the number of words (based on the BNC frequency bands) that a reader needs to know (in part at least) in order to achieve both 95% and 98% coverage at each level. As for the recommended readers' vocabulary size in order to achieve these levels of coverage the easy answer is that the more vocabulary the reader knows, the more coverage of text they get and so the better comprehension will be gained. However, these coverage figures enable the researcher to suggest more precisely the vocabulary size needed for adequate RC. For example, Nation (2006) found that between 8000 and 9000 most frequent word-families, plus knowledge of the proper nouns that are used in a text, are required for 98% coverage in non-fiction authentic written texts. In a large scale study involving 745 participants, Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010) found that for 95% coverage of authentic academic texts, knowledge of up to 5000 word-families is needed, while for independent and optimal RC (98%), a range of 8000 to 9000 word-families, plus knowledge of the proper nouns in the texts, is necessary. These numbers of families are often referred to as threshold levels of vocabulary knowledge, in that if they are attained, a learner is in a position to read authentic English texts with some success. Hence, it is suggested that these amounts of vocabulary constitute a potential target for learners to achieve before starting their university studies.

This study will therefore also investigate whether the amount of vocabulary at each level fits the figures one might expect at that level given the amount needed at some point to read general academic texts (even disregarding terminology needed for specialist texts), and whether the RTs that students are exposed to prior to reading academic texts provide the learners with the amount of vocabulary needed to achieve 95% or 98% coverage. If they appear to provide the students

with around 5000 word-families or more, this would provide support for the adequacy of these texts to potentially equip learners to successfully read in the first year, but if not, this may indicate that the students are not being well prepared to meet academic reading at the FYU level. In addition, this study will also go further to investigate whether the particular vocabulary that is needed to achieve the 95% and 98% coverage in reading at the next level(s) occurs in the RTs at the previous ones. This shows best how well the RTs progress over the three educational levels to meet the students' need. Of course we are here assuming that the students would have learnt all the words that they were exposed to, which is an optimum assumption unlikely to be true. Nevertheless this enables us to see how well the texts prepare students for later stages, in ideal conditions.

From the above mentioned figure (95% coverage), we can understand that the remaining 5% of the vocabulary is the implied potential percentage of vocabulary tokens that students could learn from the RT (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010; Nation, 2001), though this does not tell us how many types or families this 5% contains. Still, a higher percentage would indicate that the student may encounter many unfamiliar words that not only hinder their RC, but also create an excessive burden in learning these new words. Our study will therefore also compare the percentages of estimated new words which are encountered in the texts, at each level, against the ideal percentage of unfamiliar words, which is 5% of running words.

2.6.1.4 Likelihood of vocabulary in texts being known/learnt: How much vocabulary do L2 learners normally learn from instructed input?

In order to fully assess the suitability of RTs, we also need to address questions concerning the implications for vocabulary knowledge and acquisition. First, we not only need to know how much vocabulary readers need to know in order to achieve 95% coverage and so at least

minimally understand the texts at some level (see 2.6.1.3), but also whether it is achievable for them to have learnt that vocabulary before arriving at the texts in question. Secondly, we not only need to know how much vocabulary is likely to be known (covered) in a text, so how much is new and available to be learnt (more or less than 5%, see 2.6.1.3), but also whether that is a feasible amount to be learnt along with reading the text, so as to become part of the known vocabulary when texts are read at the next level. In the latter case, we need to bear in mind Krashen's (1981) view as described at the end of 2.4. According to this theory, for learning to occur, texts should contain neither too many new words (where known words cover only a small percent of the text), nor too few (where known words cover almost 100% of the text).

A complete answer to these vocabulary knowledge/learning questions would depend on many detailed factors which are beyond the scope of our study. Answering the first one fully would involve ascertaining the nature and amount of English vocabulary input from all texts prior to the level in question (including at elementary and intermediate level, which are outside our study), vocabulary input received from sources other than texts (other parts of the textbook, or beyond), and how much learners typically and actually learn from vocabulary input. Furthermore, ideally we need to know whether the prior vocabulary learning progressed more or less in the order of word frequency, with the most frequent 2000 learnt first, which is what the work in 2.6.1.2 assumed. The second question also strictly requires knowledge of what other new words from other sources than the texts being read occur in input and consequently add to the potential learning burden.

However, a tentative simplifying approach to answering these questions can be framed by reference to the number of hours of instruction that students have had and estimates in the literature for how many words are typically learnt by EFL learners per hour of instruction. Dealing with the first question at a particular level, from knowing the number of words that

EFL learners could learn per hour, and how many hours of instruction they have had before that level, as well as the number of words they need to know to attain 95% coverage of texts at that level, we can examine whether English language teaching in the KSA, according to the available time, could theoretically equip a student with the vocabulary threshold knowledge sufficient for minimal or optimal RC at that level.

Dealing with the second question, similarly, we can see if the amount of new vocabulary made available from texts at a given level exceeds the learning rate per hour of instruction that is likely to be achievable or not. From this we can approximately tell whether the new word-types that the students encounter in each secondary year or each level are actually within the normal rate at which EFL learners can learn. If the results show that the number of word-types in the RTs is below or higher than the expected number of words that EFL learners could learn, this will have implications for the decision makers in the Ministry of Education in the KSA about what goes on in their schools and their English textbooks. On the other hand, if the number of new words in the RTs appears at the normal rate that students could learn, this would indicate that the English teaching and learning situation in the KSA is in accordance with what the vocabulary research suggests.

A number of studies have investigated the number of words that EFL learners could learn per hour (e.g. Alsaif, 2011; Milton, 2009; see Table 2.2). It is clearly shown by these empirical studies on foreign language learning that learners can learn around 4.7 words per contact hour on the highest estimates and 0.5 words on the lowest estimate, according to the studies reported.

Table 2.2: Vocabulary learning per contact teaching hour.

Learners	Target language	Vocabulary learned per hour	Source
Indonesian	English	1.35 words	Nurweni and Read (1999)
Greek	English	4.4 words	Milton and Meara (1998)
British	French	3.8- 4.3 words	Milton and Meara (1998)
Greek	English	2.8 words	Vasiliu (1994) (cited in Milton and Meara, 1998)
Indian	English	1.7 – 3.3 words	Barnard (1961) (cited in Milton and Meara, 1998)
Indonesian	English	1.7 – 3.3 words	Quinn (1968 (Milton and Meara, 1998, p. 75)
Saudi	English	0.5 words	Alsaif (2011)
Greek	English	4.6 words	Milton (2009)
Hungarian	English	4.7 words	Orosz (2009) (cited in Milton, 2009, p. 75)

From these studies it appears that Saudi learners of a foreign language do learn, on average, less vocabulary than their EFL learner counterparts. However, Alsaif (2011) shows that some students could learn up to 2.17 words per hour (based on the school textbooks vocabulary test). It is important to mention that the vocabulary tests used for measuring vocabulary knowledge, especially yes/no tests (used by Alsaif, 2011), which rely on inclusion of non-words, are not free from criticism. For example, Beeckmans et al. (2001) criticise the guidelines for the construction of non-English words, and the extent to which these non-words should differ from real words, as changing more than one letter of a real word may create a non-word that differs by one letter from another word. Another important criticism is that the learners may know and recognise a word when it comes in context (i.e. in RTs) by using other clues such as grammatical structure, but not in isolation as in most tests (Read, 1997).

It should be noted that it is outside the scope of this study to measure Saudi students' actual vocabulary knowledge, and although there is criticism of the measures yielding the figures in Table 2.2, the aim of using these figures is simply to gain a general idea of the maximum number of words that EFL students could feasibly learn by formal instruction, given the time available. We assume no learning occurs outside class time, but in the Saudi context the English classes are considered the main time, if not the only time, for many students to learn English.

At this point we may perform a calculation on the above basis, which is similar to ones we will perform later on our own data, to see whether it is possible in the KSA for learners, by the FYU level, to achieve the vocabulary thresholds of 5000 or 8000 word-families (as described in 2.6.1.3) needed for 95% or 98% coverage of authentic academic text. That, according to Nation (2006), is equal to around 24,433 and 34,660 word types, respectively (see Table 2.1). We generously assume the highest number of words that students may learn per hour (see Table 2.2), which is 4.7 words. Of course, good learners may learn more than this, while poor learners learn less. But these are only generalisations. If we assume the 4.7 rate refers to types, the required time then is around 5198 hours to achieve the minimum threshold while 7,374 hours are needed for the higher threshold. However, Saudi SSs currently offer only 720 hours over all the years of learning English in school and 400 hours at the preparatory level. Therefore, if this is really the case, the Saudi authorities may need to increase the teaching hours by more than four times in order to ensure that students have a realistic chance of learning the vocabulary needed to get their English reading ability up to an acceptable level before starting their university studies. Alternatively, if the 4.7 words per hour is taken as referring to families, learners would need to learn about 4.5 families per contact hour over their entire period of learning English. In fact, this might be achievable in theory if one accepts the claims that once one or two members of a word family are learnt, the rest of the family items can be well learnt

with no extra effort, at least receptively, which is what we are concerned with here for reading, once the learner can use the inflectional system and learn the affixes which are used systematically (Nation, 2001). For example, if *happy* has been learnt, it is argued that *unhappy*, *happiness*, *happily*, *happier* etc., the rest of the family, do not have to be counted as additional words (types) to learn since they will be easily guessed when seen. Nevertheless, clearly the challenge of reaching 5000 families by the start of university major study in the KSA, and probably in many other EFL countries, is quite dramatic.

The discussion above implies some further points for our study. First, it was pointed out in 2.6.1.3 that all the discussion of threshold vocabularies needed to obtain a certain amount of text coverage and so a certain level of RC suggests that words are learnt in approximate BNC (i.e. NS) frequency order. Thus a threshold vocabulary of 5000 families does not mean any 5000 families but the most frequent ones in NS English (Milton, 2009; Nation, 2000). In the current study, we will therefore check whether the vocabulary level of the RTs progresses from including only the most frequent words to including increasingly less frequent words between the secondary level and the preparatory level.

Second, from the literature, the ideal percentage of the new running words in a text should be not more than 5%, if minimal RC is to be ensured. However, we will need to ascertain how many actual different types or families make up that 5%, or whatever percentage of new words we actually find in texts. Only then can we apply what we learned from the above discussion: that EFL students may learn from 0.5 words to 4.7 words per hour, so as to investigate the progression of the supply of new vocabulary input in the RTs in terms of whether it is (in ideal conditions) learnable at the three educational levels.

Finally, since one of the aims of teaching English at the secondary level is to prepare students for the reading needed in future studies, and due to the importance of the AWL in preparing the students for academic reading, we will check if RTs at the secondary level, and even more so at the preparatory level, contain suitable amounts of academic words (as types, families and running words) that students could learn.

2.6.1.5 Studies of the vocabulary demands of university subject textbooks

A number of studies have investigated the vocabulary level needed to secure the 95% and 98% coverage levels in spoken sources such as TV programs (Webb & Rodgers, 2009a) and films (Webb & Rodgers, 2009b), and in written texts such as novels and newspapers (Nation, 2006). In addition, business research papers (Hsu, 2011) and TOEIC and TOEFL tests (Chujo & Oghigian, 2009) have been studied. However, only a few studies have examined the lexical coverage of written texts in textbooks. At university level, for example, Hsu (2011) investigated the vocabulary level needed to reach 95% and 98% coverage in 7.2 million running words of business textbooks. The results showed that minimal RC at 95% coverage required knowledge of the most frequent 3,500 word-families, and a vocabulary size of the 5,000 most frequent word-families was needed for optimal RC (98% coverage): this is actually lower than Nation's estimates in 2.6.1.3.

Another study conducted by Hsu (2014), which is directly relevant to us, investigated the vocabulary demands of engineering textbooks at university level. A 4.75 million word-token corpus was designed, based on 100 textbooks across twenty engineering sub-disciplines. The results showed generally that knowledge of the most frequent 5000 word-families plus proper nouns, compounds and abbreviations was needed to achieve 95% coverage. However, the

required vocabulary knowledge to reach 95% coverage varied between the engineering sub-disciplines, as seen in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Vocabulary demands of engineering compulsory textbooks across 20 subject areas at 95% lexical coverage (Hsu, 2014, p. 61)

Specialist engineering subject areas	Vocabulary demand
Marine and biochemical	8500
Biotechnology	7500
Biomedical and nuclear	6500
Electro-optical, electrical, chemical and medical	5500
Materials, automation, communications and electronic	5000
Environmental, aerospace, industrial and information	4500
Management	4000
Civil and mechanical	3500

It is important to mention that the corpora of these studies were compiled from the subject textbooks that are used at university in all years without specific focus on the textbooks specified for FYU level, as used in our study. Nevertheless, Hsu's work gives us a clear suggestion of the kind of vocabulary size which may prove to be needed by our engineering first years.

2.6.1.6 Studies of the vocabulary demands of RTs and vocabulary learning

opportunities from RTs in English textbooks at secondary and university levels

A number of studies have analysed the RTs in English textbooks at university level, either aiming to examine the vocabulary needed for adequate comprehension or to investigate the vocabulary learning opportunities from the RTs in these textbooks, or they investigated both issues. Thus, they have dealt with some of the questions we discussed in 2.6.1.3 and 2.6.1.4.

For example, Hsu (2009) compiled a corpus of RTs in 36 GE textbooks that are widely used in Taiwanese universities to be taught to non-English majors (617,927 word tokens). She aimed to investigate the percentage and the number of AWL words in the texts. In addition, she wanted to investigate the vocabulary knowledge needed to reach 95% coverage in each textbook according to the BNC list of the most frequent 14 thousand words families. RANGE and FREQUENCY programs (Heatley, Nation & Coxhead, n.d.) were used in her study. The results showed that the percentage of academic running words in the whole corpus (all RTs in all the textbooks) was only 1.4%. However, the percentages varied from one textbook to another. The lowest AWL percentage was 1.3% whereas the highest AWL percentage was 7.30% of the running words. In addition, the results showed that the academic lexical items that can be learnt by using one of the thirty-six GE textbooks ranged from 49 to 415 word-families out of 570 in the AWL. Regarding the third aim of this study, the results indicated that the vocabulary knowledge required for achieving 95% coverage fluctuated from 2500 most frequent word-families (which is way below the 5000 word-families threshold; see 2.6.1.3) to a huge 13000 most frequent word-families, plus the proper nouns. The researcher finally concluded that it is important to determine “the appropriateness of book levels when choosing college GE textbooks, especially when a student’s vocabulary size has reached a certain level”, and this could be done through measuring the students’ vocabulary level, not depending “on their intuition or publishers’ claims” (2009, p.59).

It is not surprising in a context like Taiwan to use GE textbooks, not EAP, at university level since students do not study their majors in English, so no EAP 'need' arises from that source, and the choice of textbook can be made entirely based on what is the suitable proficiency level of the GE textbook (i+1) for the student with unspecified GE communication needs: hence one would not expect high rates of AV in these textbooks. This way of choosing the textbooks (based on

the students' proficiency level), may not work in the KSA context, where some majors are taught entirely in English, because there is a clear need to be met as well, for reading in disciplines taught through English in the following year.

Similarly, DehGhaedi (2013) investigated the RTs in six GE English textbooks used in 10 Azad universities in Iran in the freshmen and sophomore years with non-English major students who received their courses in Persian but needed to read English texts in their disciplines. The research aimed to investigate: 1) the percentage of the of AWL, 2) the number of academic words that occurred in the RTs in each textbook, 3) the number of words that were above the 2000 most frequent words so were assumed to be new words, 4) and the vocabulary knowledge that was needed to reach 95% coverage. The researcher scanned and saved the RTs in each textbook in a separate file, a procedure we will follow. The results (see Table 2.4) showed that the percentage of academic running words fluctuated from 2.32 % (consisting of 69 out of the 570 AWL word-families) to 5.3% (consisting of 270 out of 570 academic word-families). The results further revealed that if the students knew only the 2000 most frequent word-families, they had available to learn from 324 to 1561 word-types according to the textbooks they read. Finally, the results also showed that the vocabulary knowledge that was required to reach 95% coverage ranged from the most frequent 2500 to 4500 word-families, according to the BNC frequency lists.

Table 2.4: Results from DehGhaedi's (2013) study of university level English textbooks

Textbook	AWL		New word Types (outside the first 2000)	Vocabulary needed to reach 95% coverage
	% Tokens	No. word families		
Select Readings upper inter.	4.63%	266	1526	4000-4500
Access Reading 3	2.32%	69	324	2500-3000
Active Skills for Reading 3	5.32%	270	1561	3000-3500
Concepts & Comments reading 4	3.95%	202	1122	4000
Select Readings inter.	3.99%	211	791	2500-3000
Reading Challenge 2	3.69%	91	412	3000-3500

It is clear that the vocabulary needed to reach 95% coverage is below the suggested threshold (see 2.6.1.3), and this is expected, as are the low percentages of AWL, since these RTs are GE rather than EAP. With regard to the estimation of the new words in DehGhaedi's (2013) study, it is not clear why the researcher assumed that the students may come to the university with good knowledge of the 2000 most frequent words: it seems he has no actual information either from previous textbooks used or students' vocabulary size measures. In the current study, the new words will be able to be estimated through comparing the RTs at one level with RTs at previous levels.

Another study that investigated the vocabulary load of reading course books and the vocabulary learning opportunities they provide was done by Matsuoka and Hirsh (2010), who investigated the *New Headway Student's Book Upper-Intermediate* independently of any particular context where it was used. This covers GE rather than EAP, but is likely to be similar to books used in the preparatory year in the KSA. The corpus of 44,877 running words (which included RTs, vocabulary and grammar tasks) was analysed using the RANGE computer program based on the

first 2,000 word-families of the General Service List (GSL) (West, 1953) and the AWL (Coxhead, 2000).

The results showed that knowledge of the most frequent 2000 words plus the off-list could provide 93.4% coverage, which is below the requirement for minimal RC; if students had also known the AWL that provided them with an additional 2.1% (unsurprisingly for GE) of text coverage, that would have enabled them to reach 95% coverage. The researchers estimated the vocabulary learning opportunities from this textbook somewhat arbitrarily as lying beyond the most frequent 1000 word-families, and presented the results according to the number of repetitions. They found that the textbook offered good opportunities for improving learners' knowledge of the second 1000 most frequently used words due to the repetition (recycling) of many of these words in different contexts. Although only 603 word-families from the second 1000 most frequent words appeared in the textbook, these words were repeated as follows: 187 word-families occurred at least 5 times, 128 at least 7 times, 73 at least 10 times and 201 word-families only once. In contrast, the researchers found that the textbooks provided fewer opportunities for the students to learn academic words and words beyond the second band, as the results showed that only 271 academic word-families out of 570 word-families appeared as follows: 116 once, 44 5 times or more, 24 7 times or more, and 15 10 times or more. Therefore, for academic words to be acquired, direct teaching is suggested by the researchers. In their study the researchers focused on the number of repetitions of word-families as evidence for vocabulary learning to be possible; however, the repetition of word-families does not necessarily mean that the learners could learn the word, as each word family, especially in the most frequent 2000 word-families, may represent around 4 to 6 word-types and the occurrence of one word-type would not necessarily lead to the learning of all the word-types of one word family, so it would have been better if the researchers had presented some information about word-types.

Furthermore, the researchers do not consider the issue of whether so many words are really learnable in the time that might be available (or in Krashen's terms, *i+* too much), nor whether they constitute more than 5% of running words of text, so if not known would damage RC (2.6.1.4).

Word repetition or word recycling will not be pursued in the current study since the number of repetitions of a new word does not necessarily mean that the students can learn it, especially if, for example, the percentage of new running words in a text is very high and/or the actual number of new words in relation to hours of study is high. In addition, Matsuoka and Hirsh's (2010) study used the 2000 frequent word-families of the GSL, but the current study will use the frequency word list based on the BNC, which is more up to date than the GSL.

DehGhaedi's (2013) and Hsu (2009), Matsuoka and Hirsh (2010) studies are not like the current study in that they are only at one level. Our study has the extra ability to compare between vocabulary aspects of texts at one level and those in the RTs that students have studied before or are required to read later.

The nearest approximation to our study in terms of the examination of vocabulary and RT progression over a series of textbooks is O'Loughlin's (2012), which analysed the vocabulary in the texts in the GE textbook series *New English File*, involving three textbooks (elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate). This series is commonly used in EFL contexts and is probably similar to the series actually used in the NBU at preparatory level. The study aimed to investigate the amount of RTs at each textbook level, and how many word-families among the 2000 most frequent word-families occurred in the RTs in this series, in addition to how many academic words from the AWL were included.

The results showed that the total number of word-tokens of the RTs increased from one level to another (8,753 word-tokens in the elementary textbook, 14,381 word-tokens in the pre-intermediate textbooks and 17,617 word-tokens in the intermediate textbook). In addition, at the elementary level a learner was exposed to a total of 718 word-families, and this number increased to 1,139 word-families at the next level, and 1,311 word-families at the last one. After combining all the RTs at the three levels, the researcher found that this English series overall provided learners with fewer than 1500 word-families in all, when repeated occurrences of the same family in more than one book were discounted. Finally, the results also showed that the RTs in all the textbooks together included only 231 word-families out of the 570 word-families in the AWL. This study did not, however, look into many of the important issues we have raised and will pursue in the current study, such as percent text coverage by vocabulary which students should already know in relation to RC or quantities of new words in relation to time available to learn them.

2.6.2 Grammatical knowledge and RC

Comprehending academic texts also requires adequate knowledge of other text elements than vocabulary (Hsu, 2009). One of these elements is grammatical or structure knowledge (also called syntactic knowledge). This knowledge concerns the ways that “words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language” (Weisi, 2012, p. 147). It is vital for coherence building (Givón, 1995), as well as for “word integration in the text (Fender, 2001; Kintsch, 1998; Perfetti & Britt, 1995). Inadequate or missing grammatical knowledge may lead to unsuccessful RC (Alderson, 1993; Bernhardt, 2000; Hagtvet, 2003).

Many researchers have argued that grammatical knowledge plays a vital role in L2 RC (Anderson, 2000; Grabe, 2009, 2005; Koda, 2005; Nagy & Scott, 2000). Indeed, many studies

have shown strong correlations between RC and grammatical knowledge (e.g. Alderson, 1993; Berman, 1984; Yano, Long & Ross, 1994). Others (e.g. Shiotsu, 2010; Shiotsu & Weir, 2007; Van Gelderen et al., 2004) even believe that grammar knowledge may be superior to vocabulary in predicting RC. In contrast, a few have shown that grammatical knowledge is a weak predictor of reading ability (e.g. Ulijn & Strother, 1990).

According to Alderson (2000), "Understanding syntactic patterns is necessary for reaching 'effectiveness level' in academic reading" (p. 135). Grabe (2005), however, considers that texts with complex syntax are more difficult to be understood. This may suggest that EFL students may find that academic register is difficult as it is characterised by heavy use of complex syntactic structures when compared with other registers such as speech or newspapers (Berman, 1984; Biber, 1988; Biber et al., 1999) or ESL RTs (Miller, 2011).

Unlike with native speakers, for EFL learners the process of learning and acquiring grammatical and syntactic knowledge often occurs explicitly/consciously, which may cause difficulties in RC. As Grabe and Stoller (2011) stated, "the lack of tacit L2 grammatical knowledge ... suggests that L2 students need some foundation of structural knowledge ... in the L2 for more effective reading comprehension" (p.37). In the Saudi context, the students learn and improve their grammar skills for reading not only through their exposure to RTs in the English textbooks but also, and probably to a greater degree, through explicit teaching of grammar rules in order to be ready to deal with the academic texts that they will encounter in their textbooks in English-medium disciplines at the university level. However, practising using their grammatical knowledge in understanding RTs is more important than just possessing it.

Therefore, it is suggested that EFL and ESL learners need "countless hours of exposure to print [that they are capable of comprehending successfully]...to develop automaticity in using

information from grammatical structures to assist them in reading" (Grabe & Stoller, 2011:18). According to Grabe (2009), if learners are to achieve "fluency and automaticity with syntactic processing...they need extensive exposure and practice in reading and exploiting relevant and appropriate texts." (p. 216). Ellis' (2002) review extensively covers a number of studies that are related to and support Grabe's belief, and these studies emphasise the connection between input frequency and language acquisition. According to Ellis (2002), input frequency is linked to several language acquisition areas such as syntactic, lexical and discourse comprehension acquisition. To be precise, EFL learners develop complex probabilistic algorithms dependent on exemplars, and, after that, use this information in processing and practising language. Therefore, it appears that the frequency of the exemplars and their nature may closely affect the learners' language acquisition. This constitutes what Grabe (2009) called "relevant and appropriate texts" which may be understood, as RTs at secondary and preparatory level increasingly share lexical and grammatical features with academic texts that are the target materials, and therefore serve as adequate exemplars. The question for us then is, are the RTs used in the pre-FYU level appropriate in order to adequately improve the Saudi students' syntactic knowledge in a way that they can then deal with the academic RTs in their disciplines when they start their university studies? Since there is no established threshold for grammatical knowledge like that for vocabulary knowledge (see section 2.6.1.2), the current study aims to answer this question through analysing and comparing between the RTs at the pre-university levels (secondary and preparatory) in terms of the syntactic level. A huge gap between the RTs at one level and the next educational level, or a reversal where a higher level is less demanding than a lower one, would suggest that students may not become well prepared to encounter FYU reading at the end.

Given the huge scope of grammar knowledge, we have therefore chosen some syntactic features that are known to be distinctively used more in academic written English than other registers,

based on research in the field (e.g. Biber, 1988; Biber, 2006; Biber & Gray, 2010; Biber et al., 2002; Biber et al., 1999). These studies suggest that academic texts are more abstract and densely packed with information than GE texts. According to Halliday (1994), the noun phrase (NP) is the primary resource used by the grammar for packing in lexical items at high density. This information packaging feature is what makes the RTs more complex to be comprehended (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008), especially for EFL students who are not used to this language during their English language study.

Therefore, in the current study the selected academic syntactic features to be investigated in the RTs at the three educational levels are those features that serve to achieve this information packaging, which are typically nouns and noun phrases that make the texts appear nominal rather than clausal.

It is worth mentioning that it is not expected that the RTs that are used pre-FYU level would be exactly typical of academic texts, especially at the secondary level; however, if these texts used at pre-university levels are a true preparation for reading academic textbooks, there is a possibility that the reading materials' designers for at least the preparatory level may have used the results of corpus research and selected RTs from sources that are grammatically similar to university textbooks or at least employed some relevant structures in the RTs, so as to achieve a graded preparation for authentic academic prose. Therefore, it is expected that these academic features may progress gradually over the RTs that the students encounter prior to FYU level; so whenever the students go on to a higher grade, more academic language would be present until they reach the target language which is used in the academic texts in their university subject textbooks.

According to Biber (1988), prepositional phrases (especially *of* prepositional phrases) and attributive adjectives are used considerably more in academic prose than other registers (e.g. newspaper and speech). They function as optional postmodifiers (e.g. *of* prepositional phrase) or premodifiers (e.g. attributive adjectives, noun modifier) to the noun (called the head noun) in the noun phrase:

Determiner + [Premodification] + Head noun + [Postmodification and complementation]

(Biber et al, 1999; cited in Parkinson & Musgrave, 2014).

The head noun acts as the core of the NP upon which its constituents can be built (Crystal, 2004; Hillier, 2004). The other constituents (determiners, premodifiers, and postmodifiers) modify the head noun (Biber et al., 1999; Crystal, 2004). Using modifiers on each (or both) side of the head noun therefore has great potential for producing compressed forms to densely package information. As Fang and Schleppegrell (2008) argue: “the longer the noun phrase, the more information it is able to hold” (p. 29). According to Biber et al. (1999), around 60% of nouns in authentic academic prose have either a pre- or postmodifier or both.

In academic English there are three commonly used types of noun phrase premodification: attributive adjectives, (present and past) participial modifiers, and nouns (Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). By contrast, finite relative clauses, *of* prepositional phrases, and present and past participials are commonly used postmodifiers in academic texts (Biber et al., 1999).

In addition, nominalization, which is the conversion of a verb or adjective to a noun, usually with an overt derivational suffix such as *-tion* or *-ment*, is one of the common features in academic written texts (Biber and Gray, 2010; Biber et al., 1999; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008; Halliday, 1989). The use of nominalization, for example, *indemnification*, *centralization*, in

academic prose serves the purpose of packing several ideas (e.g. *the act of somebody centralizing something*) into the sentence through lexicalising technical and abstract concepts (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008; Halliday, 1989). Furthermore, the use of nominalization makes the written text more impersonal and distant from the reader (Freeman & Freeman, 2009) since often the agent and the object of the underlying verb are not specified.

In the current study the above academic syntactic features were selected as they are more frequently used in academic prose (including textbooks and articles) than other registers such as newspapers and speech (See Biber et al., 1999). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is only one study, Miller (2011), which investigated the academic syntactic features that are used in ESL reading textbooks. This study will be reviewed later in section 2.6.1.

Finally, it is widely discussed that first language (L1) literacy knowledge might be transferred and used in L2 reading (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Lee & Schallert, 1997; Park, 2013; Torki, Kasmani, & Valipour, 2014; Yamashita, 2002). This might well affect grammatical knowledge rather than other factors in our study such as vocabulary. However, this transfer of the L1 is not guaranteed to occur (Jiménez, 1997; Mathes, Pollard-Durodola, Cárdenas-Hagan, Linan-Thompson, & Vaughn, 2007) as many studies showed that L2 language proficiency is a stronger predictor of L2 reading ability than L1 reading ability (e.g. Brisbois, 1995; Bossers, 1991; Carrell, 1991; Lee & Schallert, 1997; Taillefer, 1996; Yamashita, 2002). In addition, L1 transfer, if it occurred, is not necessarily a positive transfer which helps the learners' reading ability (e.g. Brown, 2007; Ellis, 2008). It mainly depends on how far there are similarities between the two languages (i.e. English and Arabic in our case) (Park, 2013).

If in fact the dense NP information packing we noted for academic NPs in English was matched by similar structures in academic register in Arabic, and transfer occurred, it could be argued

that there would be little need for English RTs at pre-FYU levels to carefully introduce such structures in a graded way, since they would not be a problem. In fact, it is believed that although Arabic and English share some similar features (i.e. the existence of the noun phrase and modifiers) in written academic texts, there are also some differences which may lead Arab learners of English to misunderstand the English written texts if they rely on their L1 syntactic knowledge. For example, the adjective and the present and past participles as premodifiers in English are all rendered as postmodifiers in Arabic. Consider the following examples (in Modern Standard Arabic)¹:

1. The **holy mosque** in Mecca → al-masdzidu **al-hara:mu** fi: Makkata.
2. the **broken window** → an-na:fiḏatu **al-maksu:ratu**.
3. The **falling rain** → al-matʿaru **al-munhamiru**.

A second point in respect of structures modification concerns the use of prepositional *of* phrases. While many occur like in English as postmodifiers (4), the prepositional *of* phrase in English is sometimes rendered in Arabic using the ‘idʿa:fa’ construction, as in (5) follows:

4. An example of a good person → miḥa:lun **ʕla: af-xsʿi atʿ-tʿajjib**.
5. The king of Jordan → maliku **l-urdunni**.

In (5), there is no separate word used that equates with *of*. Instead, it is the inflection on the end of the noun *-i* which shows the genitive construction (idʿa:fa) (Ryding, 2005).

¹ All examples in Arabic are transliterated using the IPA transliteration system.

Finally, in Arabic the closely corresponding equivalent of English nominalization is the Arabic verbal noun 'al-masʿdar'. However, not every 'masʿdar' in Arabic is necessarily a nominalization in English or vice versa, as in some cases both languages use a separate lexical item rather than a deverbal derivation (see Table 2.5 below; Alsaif & Markert, 2011). Furthermore, the morphological form of masʿdar derivation in Arabic is quite different from English, not depending on suffixes but on infixed vowels.

Therefore, it is believed that students in our context do need to have prior exposure to the characteristics of the English academic register that they will encounter at the university level.

Table 2.5: A list of Al-Maʿdar patterns in Arabic (adapted from Alsaif & Markert, 2011); the researcher amended the transliteration and added the translation of the root.

Root	Pattern	Masʿdar	Translation
سبح / <i>sbḥ</i> / swim	فعالة / <i>fiʿa:la</i> /	سباحة / <i>siba:ḥa</i> /	swimming
نفذ / <i>nʔḍ</i> / execute	تفعيل / <i>tafʿi:l</i> /	تنفيذ / <i>tanfī:ḍ</i> /	execution
دفع / <i>dʔʕ</i> / defend	فعال / <i>fiʿa:l</i> /	دفاع / <i>difa:ʕ</i> /	defence
زرع / <i>zrʕ</i> / farm (v)	فعالة / <i>fiʿa:la</i> /	زراعة / <i>zira:ʕa</i> /	agriculture, farming
حرب / <i>ḥrb</i> / fight (v)	فعل / <i>faʕl</i> /	حرب / <i>ḥarb</i> /	war

2.6.3 Readability and RC

The term readability has been defined variously by many scholars (Dale and Chall, 1949; Klare, 1963; Pikulski, 2002). In this thesis readability of a text refers to “the ease with which readers are able to read and understand [a particular text]” (Oakland & Lane, 2004). As with vocabulary and grammar ease, this depends on the match between the demand of the text and the ability of

the reader, and in this study we are focusing on the former component. Thus, if the readability level of a text exceeds the reader's reading ability, the reader is not ready to adequately understand the text and learn from it. Carrell (1987, p. 21), again echoing Krashen's $i+1$ ideas (see end of 2.4), states that if materials are too easy, students are unchallenged and bored, and no learning occurs. In contrast, if materials are too difficult, students become frustrated and withdrawn, and again no learning occurs.

A number of readability measures have been developed, which quantitatively assess the difficulty of a text, regardless of reader knowledge (e.g., Dale & Chall, 1948; Flesch, 1951; Fry, 1977; Gunning, 1968 cited in Harrison, 1984, p.79; Spache, 1953). Some of these have become commonly used, especially by textbook writers and publishers (Oakland & Lane, 2004). In determining a text's difficulty, most of these readability measures use formulae relying on two surface-level features of text: vocabulary (normally measured by the number of letters or syllables within a word) and syntax (usually measured by sentence length and/or paragraph length) (Oakland & Lane, 2004). The readability scores are reported as numerical indices and some have been referenced to norms for US NS school grade levels (e.g. FOG), others are just reported on a 0-100 scale (e.g. FRE).

These readability formulas have received many criticisms due to their limited nature (e.g. Bruce, Rubin, & Starr, 1981; Templeton, Cain, & Miller, 1981). They ignore many factors which affect RC, including text topic and rhetorical structure and, of course, the reader factors (Crossley, Dufty, McCarthy & McNamara, 2007; Kasule, 2011; McNamara & Magliano, 2009), hence they lack validity as absolute measures of readability. According to Carrell (1987), readability formulas are not suitable for predicting L2 texts' readability level as they do not take into account the characteristics of the L2 readers as well as text related factors.

For the current study we believe it has been convincingly demonstrated that these readability measures are not suitable to be used in EFL contexts, either pedagogically or for research purposes, as absolute indicators of readability of texts for students, in the full modern sense that we accord to the construct of readability. However, these readability formulas can be used in another way, such as in our study, which is purely for making a relative comparison between RTs, whether at the same educational level or at different educational levels, as crude measures of overall vocabulary and grammatical difficulty, as used in some studies such as Miller (2011) and Freahat (2014). Since the readability measures are mainly concerned with two surface level features of RTs, in the current study, the readability formulas were chosen as an additional, minor, text measure compared with the other full analyses of vocabulary, academic syntactic features and topics, to assess the degree to which these features differ between RTs of the two English series that are used in the secondary level, to compare the RTs at the three successive levels of secondary, preparatory, and FYU level, and to be able to compare with other studies that have used such measures.

Table 2.6 summarises the readability formulas used in our study. In using these formulas, it is assumed that long sentences are more likely to be more difficult than short ones and that long words are on average rarer and more difficult than short ones (Greenfield, 2004; Gunning, 2003). The current study will also separately calculate average sentence length and mean word length to compare between the RTs at each level. What we claim to be measuring with these formulae in more detail is as follows. Longer words tend to be less frequent and may demand more decoding of inflections and other internal morphology. Longer sentences provide space for more clauses and intricate clausal and phrasal embedding, again demanding more of a reader. Large differences between texts in sentence and word length therefore might suggest that readers are not receiving input at a similar level of lexical and grammatical complexity.

Table 2.6: Six common readability measures

The readability measure name	The formula	Predictive variables	Scale type
The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	$.39 \text{ AWL} + 11.8 \text{ ASL} - 15.59$	Average word length in syllables (AWL) Average sentence length in words (ASL)	US school grade level scale Higher score means more difficult
Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease (FRE)	$206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{AWL})$	Average sentence length in words (ASL) Average word length in syllables (AWL)	0-100 scale Higher score means easier
Gunning's FOG (1952 cited in Harrison, 1984, p.79)	$0.4 \times (\text{ASL} + \text{PSW})$	Average number of words per sentence (ASL) Percentage of words with more than three syllables (PSW)	US grade level scale Higher score means more difficult
SMOG (McLaughlin, 1969)	$3 + \sqrt{P}$	Number of polysyllabic words (i.e. two or more syllable words) (P) in 30 sentences	US grade level scale Higher score means more difficult
The Coleman-Liau Index (CLI)	$0.0588L - 0.296S - 15.8$	The average number of letters per 100 words (L). The average number of sentences per 100 words (S)	US grade level scale Higher score means more difficult

2.6.3.1 Studies of the readability of RTs in ESL and EFL contexts

There are a few studies which have investigated readability in EFL RTs, but to the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of these studies were conducted in the Saudi context. All the studies reviewed here used readability measures as an indicator to examine the differences between the RTs in various education years or levels, which is similar to the purpose of using readability measures in the current study.

In addition to Freahat's (2014) study, which will be discussed later in section 2.6.6.2, Riazi, and Mosalanejad (2010), in part of their study, investigated the readability level of RTs in three successive high school English textbooks, and in the pre-university English textbook in Iran, somewhat equivalent to the preparatory level in the KSA. The researchers analysed all the RTs in the four textbooks, namely *English Book 1, 2, 3*, and *Learning to Read English for Pre-University Students*. The results showed that the RTs became progressively longer and had progressively lower ease scores across the four levels (see Table 2.7), as expected, though this does not of course tell us whether the readabilities were at a suitable level for RC by the students, or too demanding/not demanding enough relative to their ability, or what they needed to read later. In addition, the results showed that the average text length in senior high school was far shorter than the average sentence length in the pre-university level, which suggests that the school texts were not an adequate preparation for reading at the higher level: i.e. the grading was poor, involving too big a jump between school and pre-university, although the FRE figures showed a smoother progression.

2.7: The readability scores in Riazi & Mosalanejad (2010)

The textbook	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	Pre-university
Average Text Length	204.6	238	273.1	567.28
Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease	85.4	80.6	62.8	54.3

Browne (1998) also investigated the difference between the readability level of secondary high school textbook RTs and the RTs in EFL textbooks at university level, which were used for none English major students, as well as the English RTs used in some university subjects in Japan. This then is close to our study in scope across levels, but far narrower in that it only considered readability. The samples of RTs were taken from three sources: 1) four popular third

year secondary English textbooks; 2) 47 EFL university level textbooks; 3) four university unstated subject textbooks written for native speakers (2 undergraduate level, and 2 postgraduate level). The results (see Table 2.8) showed that the readability level of the RTs of 12th grade high school varied widely from 41.55 to 89.87 according to Flesch's reading ease measure. In addition, the RTs in the EFL university textbooks were less demanding than the RTs in two English secondary level textbooks, while they were more demanding than the RTs in the other two secondary level textbooks.

The results also supplied useful information about the readability of fully academic RTs used for university subjects. They were more difficult than the RTs in the EFL university textbooks, as well as some of the RTs at the secondary level, which, according to the researcher, is not surprising. However, it is surprising to see the RTs in two of the secondary level textbooks were more difficult than RTs in the university subjects. We must remember, however, that readability measures do not capture the difficulty of the text content.

Overall, applying the syllabus concept of grading, the progression does not appear to be very smooth across successive educational levels. We might question whether some texts at school level may be too demanding, given what the students possibly know already, and others in university level EFL textbooks later not demanding enough, given the readability of the subject textbooks being prepared for. This is quite surprising and we will look for such features in our study.

One important limitation in the above study is the sampling: the researcher in this study did not collect all the RTs at the secondary level or other levels and a small number of texts may not provide a clear picture about the reading level in a book. Another limitation is that we do not know whether the university English texts were used before or concurrently with English-

medium subject textbooks. In the current study, all the RTs at the secondary and preparatory level were collected and reasonable and balanced samples were taken from the FYU subjects' textbooks in three disciplines.

Table 2.8: Readability in textbooks at school and university in Japan in Browne (1998).

The source	The name of the book	Average text length	Flesch Reading Ease	Flesch Grade level
12 th grade Secondary textbooks	The New Age Reader	1220	41.55	12.9
	Legend English Reading	1737	70	7.31
	Spectrum English Reading	1011	42.85	12.38
	New Horizon English Reading	986	89.87	3.33
EFL university textbooks	Not mentioned	1085.17	64.02 (average)	8.3
University subjects' textbook (graduate level)	Not mentioned	1133	50.07	10.63
University subjects' textbook (postgraduate level)	Not mentioned	1161	34.81	13.27

2.6.4 Content knowledge and RC

The content (topic) of text may also affect reading comprehension (Alderson, 2000; Clapham, 1996; Feng, 2011; Gabb, 2000; Kintsch, 1998; Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007; Yin, 1985). For example, a reader may find concrete texts, which discuss real objects and events, easier than

abstract ones (Alderson, 2000; Clapham, 1996). Though often discussed in terms of the prior knowledge of the topic that the reader possesses or does not possess, as with the vocabulary and grammar dimensions discussed earlier, content/topic difficulty resides equally in the text. That is to say, a text is difficult or not in its content depending on both the choice of content made for the text and the prior content knowledge of the reader, not just one or the other of those (Alderson, 2000). In our study, the prime focus is on the former.

Schema theory also emphasizes the significance for RC of background content knowledge in the reading process (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). This theory deals with the previous “knowledge structures which are stored in the mind” (Nassaji, 2007, p. 83) and how language learners link this previously existing knowledge to the information in the text they read (Alderson, 2000; Carrell, 1983b; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Johnson, 1981, 1982). Background knowledge schemata may be classified into three different types: formal, content and linguistic schemata (Carrell, 1991; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). The formal schema is the reader’s prior knowledge of the main organisational features or rhetorical structure of different types of text (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). For reasons of time and space we are not pursuing consideration of this in the reading analysis in our study. The linguistic schema refers to the “prior linguistic knowledge” (Carrell, 1983b, p.4), and this we investigate from the text input side through the vocabulary and grammar. Finally, the content schema, our concern here, refers to “the background knowledge of the content area of a text” (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983, p. 560). The content schema contains not only general knowledge but also knowledge of the subject matter (Adams, Bell, & Perfetti, 1995). In our context, at FYU level this last would be knowledge of relevant aspects of medicine or engineering, in fully academic specialist texts.

Many researchers argue that the effect of the familiarity of the topic in reading comprehension might be overshadowed by or interact with the effect of readers’ limited language proficiency or

linguistic difficulty in texts (e.g., Al-Shumaimeri, 2006; Carrell, 1991; Clapham, 1996; Hudson, 1982). However, many studies have shown the positive effect of subject-related background knowledge on discipline-related RC (e.g., Alderson & Urquhart, 1985; Barry & Lazarte, 1995; Chen & Donin, 1997; Clapham, 1996). According to Lin and Chern (2014), background knowledge seems to contribute more than language proficiency to RC of a specialist academic text. In other words, if readers do not know anything about the topic of the text, they are more likely to encounter difficulties in comprehending the text. Correspondingly, we could say that there is a considerable impact of the choice of RT topic, relative to reader knowledge, on RC, and on opportunities to learn from the text.

For example, Lin and Chern (2014) investigated the effectiveness of the background knowledge on the reading comprehension among 71 sophomore English-medium-major students from two departments: political science (33 students) and the department of English literature (38 Taiwanese students). The students were required to complete a reading section of the TOEFL test, take a political background knowledge test written in Chinese, which required explicit answers, and read and summarise a text in a political field. Both background and summarization tasks were scored by political teachers. The results showed that the students with good political knowledge performed better than the students with low political knowledge. However, the L2 reading proficiency did not reflect the students' summary writing performance. Therefore, the researchers suggested that the background knowledge of the topic had more effect on RC than L2 reading proficiency when it was assessed by the summarization task.

From the above, we can see that background knowledge of the text's topic, or, put another way, the choice of text topic relative to the reader's background knowledge, plays a strong role in RC. When learners have rich knowledge about the topics they read, they are likely to better understand the texts, and so be better able to learn those aspects of content or language that are

new, providing of course that they have the necessary L2 proficiency that enables them to read effectively. In our study, we will also be considering how the selection of the topics of RTs could play a role in how well they are understood, by reference to their topic knowledge demand relative to what the readers may already know. However, we will also be considering the less discussed topic of how well the text topics at lower levels may function in preparing EFL students for later reading of academic texts. In other words, in preparing an EFL student to study in a medical college, the chosen topic of the RTs earlier could play an important role in their degree of readiness.

According to Shih (1992), the topics of RTs should be appropriate to the students' educational level. It is, however, difficult to find statements about which topics are appropriate, either in terms of ease/familiarity or importance/relevance, in EFL secondary school RTs. Many researchers do, however, suggest that the topics of RTs in ESL or EFL courses should be interesting for the students as well as relevant to them (e.g. Harmer, 2001; Shih, 1992; Ur, 1996). Edgier (1999) argues that the interest is one of the main psychological factors that affect the learning process. Indeed, in many successful international textbook series for use at secondary level, such as *Headway* or *Touchstone*, we find that the authors appear to be heavily influenced in topic choice by what they think will interest readers of the targeted age group (e.g. young adults). But interest clearly implies introducing some content into a text which the reader will not be familiar with (i+1): it is not interesting to read only information which one already knows.

For the secondary level, where the RTs are GE, we agree that the RTs should be interesting and relevant to the students' background, but they should also relate to the students' educational level. We will judge whether secondary level texts suit the students' educational level or not by comparing the topics of the RTs with the official Ministry objectives for the educational level.

In addition, in this study, we examine how RTs' topics at the secondary level would help to prepare for the RT topics that are encountered by the students at the preparatory level.

Regarding RT topics in EAP courses, which EFL students normally study at preparatory level, there are two different perspectives. The first view that was stressed by Hyland (2002) emphasises the importance of "specificity", suggesting that reading materials at the preparatory level should be closely related to the students' needs, which is reading in their potential disciplines (ESAP) (Harwood, 2005; Jones, 1990). The second view is against the former one in that it does not recommend specific discipline topics, and relies on texts that contain academic features found in specialist texts in many disciplines (EGAP), but with topics that are accessible to non-specialists (Huckin, 2003). In this study the topics that are found at the preparatory level will be checked to investigate which of the above views is more closely reflected (or neither). In addition, the suitability of these topics in preparing the students for their academic FYU level reading will be investigated through the students' and their teachers' judgments.

2.6.5 The length of the texts

The length of the text is another aspect that may cause difficulties in L2 reading (Alderson, 2000). A few studies have investigated the impact of text length on reading comprehension in EFL contexts. Hashemi and Bagheri (2014) investigated the impact of text length on RC among 102 EFL Iranian males and 105 females aged around 20 years. They were grouped into eight groups (four male groups and four female groups). One male and one female group read long texts within a time limit, a second pair of groups read short texts within a time limited, the third pair of groups read the long texts with no time limit, and finally, the fourth pair of groups read short texts with no time limit. All the participants were also asked to answer 10 multiple-choice questions for each text. The long texts were TOEFL RT samples (lengths 359, 332, 349, 363,

and 353 words). These were reduced to create the short texts (264, 239, 240, 268, and 259 words). The results showed that participants who read the short texts outperformed the participants who read the long ones. Thus, the researcher concluded that the length of the RTs affected RC.

However, other studies in EFL contexts found that the length of the text has no significant effect on reading comprehension. For example, Mehrpour and Riazi (2004) investigated the impact of text length on RC among 100 Iranian university students (50 English-majors and 50 from other different disciplines). Two reading tests were used, each with three RTs accompanied by 30 questions. The first test contained original RTs taken from TOEFL sample exams, and the other included shortened versions of those originals. The results showed that the effect of text length on RC was marginal but not significant. The researchers suggested that RT length does not affect RC, at least with advanced English learners. Since in our study the students cannot be called advanced, we may therefore assume that text length could have an effect.

Complementing Mehrpour and Riazi (2004), Jalilehvand (2012) examined the impact of text length as well as pictures on reading comprehension among 79 Iranian secondary level students. In his study, the participants were grouped into four groups, each receiving one of the following reading tasks: 1) long text with picture, 2) long text without picture, 3) short text with picture, and 4) short text without picture. The students in each group were also asked to answer questions (5 multiple choice and 10 true/false questions). The researchers again found that the text length did not significantly affect RC, even though the students cannot have been advanced English learners. This might be because all the texts were in fact short, even the so-called long ones.

No studies (including the above ones) to the researcher's knowledge investigated students' RC using RT of a length which they may encounter in real disciplinary reading in a subject like medicine. A NS subject textbook may contain 500 words just on one page, considerably longer than the 'long' texts in the studies above, and students are often set to read many pages between one subject class and another. With respect to really long texts, Engineer (1977; cited in Alderson, 2000), discussing the testing of reading skills, indicates that learners' reading abilities may appear to change when they encounter texts longer than 1000 words. The suggestion is that longer texts require abilities that short ones do not, such as discourse processing abilities. In addition, Alderson (2000) argues that the ability to identify the main idea of long texts might be qualitatively different from the ability to identify the main idea in shorter texts. Furthermore, it has been argued that increases in text length lead to increases in demands on the working memory system (Andreassen & Bråten, 2009; Baddeley, 2000).

From the above we believe that text length must be another important factor affecting RC, and, consequently, the learning of language and/or content that can arise from reading, at least in the FYU in our context. Hence, EFL learners need to be trained in how to deal with progressively longer texts over the educational levels, so as to be able to cope with the amount they are expected to read in the FYU. The current study, therefore, aims to investigate the suitability of the RT lengths found at the lower educational levels in preparing the students to cope with the lengthy RTs that they may encounter in the real situation at the higher educational levels.

In fact, there have been a few studies which recorded text lengths at different educational levels, which we will be able to compare our findings with. As reviewed above in section 2.6.3, Tables 2.7 and 2.8, we saw in Iran a reasonably graded progression of mean text lengths increasing through secondary level and on to preparatory level, though at the last level only reaching 567 words (Riazi, & Mosalanejad, 2010), while remarkably in Japan, secondary, preparatory and

FYU levels all seemed to exhibit the same sort of average text lengths, over 1000 words (Browne, 1998). Both these progressions seem suboptimal in that the first leaves rather a big leap after the preparatory level to likely over 1000 in the FYU, while the latter starts off surely too demanding and presents no gradation.

2.6.6 Types of texts

A further widely discussed factor affecting RC is the text structure or organisation. According to Grabe (2002: 10) “text, structures can be understood as knowledge structures or basic rhetorical patterns in texts”. Generally, texts are classified according to rhetorical structures such as: narration, description, exposition, argumentation and instruction (Werlich, 1976), or dialogue (Adam, 1992). Each type of text has some features which make it different from the others (see Table 2.9).

L2 reading research has shown that the readers’ background knowledge of text structures (termed ‘formal schemata’) for the types of texts they are required to read contributes considerably to facilitating reading comprehension (Carrell, 1992; Lukica, 2011; Jiang & Grabe, 2007, Vahidi, 2008; Zhengfang, 2006; Namjoo & Marzban, 2012). According to Grabe and Stoller (2011), the awareness of text structures in L2 is necessary for reading comprehension. Carrell & Eisterhold (1983) argue the text structure awareness provides students with a roadmap that helps them to locate the needed information. Recognizing the text structure helps to decrease the cognitive load during reading, and allows readers to concentrate on other aspects of the text.

We must of course recognise that, as with other aspects of reading, problems arise essentially where there is a mismatch between reader formal schema knowledge and the structure of the text to be read. While at some educational levels this can be dealt with by choosing texts with

structures to suit the reader's prior knowledge, in many cases, as in our context at FYU level, the text type to be read cannot be altered to suit the reader. Therefore the solution most often discussed is the widening of the reader's knowledge of text structures to include that of texts required to be read. However, research on the suitability of the RTs in EFL English textbooks in increasing students' text structure knowledge to be well-prepared for university reading is still scarce in the EFL context especially in KSA.

In examining the suitability of the RT that students exposed to at the secondary level in the EFL context, Sidek (2010) examined the reading texts in *the Form Five EFL English language textbook* used in Malaysia. The researcher found the majority of the reading texts were narratives (23 accounting for 63%) whereas expository texts accounted for only 13 (36%). Thus, the researcher concluded that the textbooks were not sufficient to prepare the students to the university reading where a lot of expository texts will be encountered. This however seems to ignore the reading texts met at other secondary levels, and also in textbooks used in university English classes. Furthermore there was no analysis of English medium subject textbooks which would help in providing a clearer picture of the reading that the students encounter at both educational levels.

The current study intended to investigate the suitability of the reading texts at the lower educational levels in preparing the students for reading at the higher educational level (academic context) through analysis of the text structures, as for the other text features analyzed. However, due the limited time and space, this was only able to be done through the students' and their teachers' perceptions at the three successive educational levels.

Table 2.9: Description of different types of text structure.

Type of text structure	Description
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often structurally organized around an agent going through sequenced event/s that are linked by some goal(s), motives, plan(s) (Kent, 1984). • Not necessary organized in a linear pattern (Graesser et. al., 1991). • Examples: stories, medical history.
Expository	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses factual information or specific ideas that are connected and interrelated (Koda, 2005). • Structurally organized in various patterns such description, sequence, enumeration, cause/effect, problem/solution, and compare/contrast (Gordon, 1990; Meyer & Freedle, 1984). • Examples: textbooks, newspaper reports.
Argumentative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on the relations between concepts and involves the cognitive property of judging, of establishing relations between concepts by detecting similarities and contrast (de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981). • Relies on logic and urge specific actions or beliefs based on a clear presentation of reasons for such actions or beliefs (Salyer, 2001). • Examples: academic articles, and newspaper leader articles.
Descriptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on differentiation and interrelation of perceptions in space (Werlich, 1976). It tells what things or actions look like. • Examples: some textbooks, product details.
Instructive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has information is organized to provide the reader with actions to be performed in order to achieve a particular goal. • Examples: scientific instrument manual, diagnosis procedure, cooking instructions.

2.6.7 Studies comparing ESL/EFL reading texts in textbooks at lower educational levels and university textbooks to examine the suitability of preparation for the university reading

This section reviews the two most related studies to ours, in that they had a clear aim to investigate the suitability of RTs prior to university in preparing EFL or ESL students for academic subject RTs.

2.6.7.1 Miller (2011)

Miller (2011) investigated the suitability of RTs in three ESL textbooks² commonly used in the USA for preparing international students for academic language, supposedly through exposing them to similar language to what they may meet in university textbooks.

The researcher compiled an ESL RT corpus of 69,797 tokens. Another corpus was designed, which contained 252,100 tokens taken from university textbooks that were encountered by the students in the first two years at university in six discipline areas: business, humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, education, and engineering. For the comparison, the researcher focused on readability level, AWL words (Coxhead, 2000), and some academic syntactic features that are commonly employed to achieve information packaging (see Table 2.10). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the only study that has investigated suitability of ESL reading through analysing texts based on academic syntactic features. Miller did not, however,

² *Tapestry Reading 4* (Sokolik, 2000), *Mosaic 2: Reading* (Wegmann, Knezevic, & Bernstein, 2001), and *NorthStar Reading and Writing Advanced, 2nd Edition* (Cohen & Miller, 2003).

include a comparison based on overall vocabulary nor the selected topics or text length, which we also consider important.

Table 2.10: Summary of Miller's (2011) study results.

Features		ESL text	University textbooks
Sentence length		16.86	18.61
Word length		4.74	5.02
% AWL		4.78	8.4
Postnominal modification (Per 1000 words)	Finite relative clauses	8.28	8.40
	noun + <i>of</i> prepositional phrase	20.83	30.94
	present participial	1.73	2.47
	past participial	1.21	3.71
Prenominal modification (Per 1000 words)	present participial	1.27	4.07
	past participial	1.49	5.24
	attributive adjectives	46.74	64.94
	noun + noun sequence	20.41	36.25
Nominalization (Per 1000 words)		39.68	59.61

The results showed great differences on all the comparison features apart from readability (measured by sentence and word length). The percentages of AWL running words in the ESL reading corpus and the university corpus were 4.78% and 8.80%, respectively, which means, according to Miller, that the ESL textbooks contained 15 fewer AWL words per page than the university textbooks. The results also showed that the ESL textbooks exposed the learners to only between 248 and 391 word-families from the whole AWL (570), depending on the textbook they used. Table 2.10 summarises the differences in academic syntactic features. The researcher found that the ESL RTs appeared to compare favourably with Social Science

textbooks and differ substantially from the other disciplines on most academic syntactic features. In effect, we could say that the ESL textbooks had the characteristics of EGP rather than EAP textbooks. The researcher concluded that further consideration should be given to text selection in ESL textbooks used for university preparation, in order to achieve successful student preparedness.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, it reports the findings together for the three ESL textbooks although it is unlikely that a university preparation course would have used all three of them. It is contextually more realistic to analyse and report each textbook separately, which is how we deal with the textbooks considered in our study. Secondly, this study only took into consideration the reading input at the level just before university level, while our study will go further to also include the level before the preparation level, which is the secondary school level. Thirdly, the researcher compared levels using a range of texts likely to be used by some students at each level studied, whereas we focus on the texts actually encountered at pre-university levels and at the FYU level by a specific population of students in a defined context, which we feel is more realistic.

2.6.7.2 Freahat (2014)

Freahat (2014) investigated the appropriateness of the RTs in secondary school textbooks³ to prepare the students firstly for the university EFL textbooks⁴ that are taught to all students in the

³ Pack 11 taught to grade 11, and pack 12 taught to grade 12

⁴ Headway Plus Pre-intermediate

first year at university (through readability analysis and students' and teachers' perceptions), and secondly, for reading in university disciplines (based on the students' and English teachers' perceptions only). The study was conducted in Jordan, an EFL context much closer to ours than Miller's ESL one. For instance, similar to the KSA, it uses a GE rather than EAP textbook at university level despite the aim to prepare for academic reading in English for subject majors. In addition, English is the medium of instruction for some disciplines at the universities in both the KSA and Jordan. The only difference is that students in the KSA (particularly at the NBU) do not study any materials related to their disciplines in their preparatory year, while in Jordan the students may study some introductory courses in their disciplines concurrently with the EFL preparatory course (so preparatory level and FYU are simultaneous).

Unlike Miller's study, Freahat (2014) analysed the RTs in secondary English textbooks and university level English textbooks, though in terms of readability level⁵ only. Furthermore, the perceptions of 274 FYU students (who took the EFL course), 10 secondary English teachers, and 8 university English teachers were also investigated through questionnaires (for students) and interviews (for teachers).

The readability results of the study revealed that the RTs at secondary level were remarkably on average three grades harder than the RTs in the EFL university texts (see Table 2.11).

⁵ The researcher used Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease and Flesch Grade Level readability measures.

Table 2.11: Freahat's (2014) results based on readability scores.

The readability measures	Secondary Pack 11	Secondary Pack 12	University: Headway
Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease	60.8	58.6	75
Flesch Grade Level	9.2	9.5	5.78

Nevertheless, the self-report results showed that the students thought that the RTs at secondary level were “suitable” (average of 3.51 out of 5) to prepare them for the RTs in EFL textbooks at university level, while the RTs at secondary level were considered “fairly suitable” (average 2.73) in preparing them for reading university subject textbooks.

The secondary English teachers, however, considered that the RTs in the secondary textbooks were not sufficient to prepare the students for subject reading at university level, and declared that the majority of the students would suffer at university due to their low levels of English reading ability. The university English teachers perceived that the RTs in the EFL university textbook (*Headway*) were very simple and below the desired level for the students at university level. However, these teachers also reported that the majority of the students had poor reading ability and were not yet ready to cope even with RTs in the university EFL textbook. Moreover, they perceived that the RTs in that EFL textbook were not testing enough to prepare the students for the reading demands of subject textbooks.

While we were attracted by the idea of obtaining self-report data from teachers and students in addition to analysing the texts themselves, which we have not found done in most studies in this area, we can raise doubts regarding the results of this study for various reasons. First, the researcher did not gather secondary students' perceptions but depended only on university

students. For our study, we believe that secondary level students could provide us with a deeper understanding, as the university students' judgment of the secondary level texts might have been clouded by the experience of reading the university level EFL textbook. Second, the researcher did not also gain the views of university subject teachers, as we propose to do, so as to get a clearer picture of how well prepared the students really are to read in their disciplines.

Freahat's results showed a disparity between the teachers' and the students' views regarding the appropriateness of the RTs at secondary level in preparing the students for university reading demands. This could be due to a variety of factors which we cannot understand clearly due to the limited data gathered, as the researcher depended only on closed questionnaires for gathering the students' perspectives. It would have been better if some interviews with the students had also been conducted. In the questionnaire, the researcher used the following scale: strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, uncertain = 3, disagree = 2, strongly disagree = 1. However, for the score interpretation, the following scale was adopted: very suitable (4.5-5), suitable (3.5- 3.49), fairly suitable (2.5-3.49), not suitable (1.5- 2.49), not suitable at all (1-1.49). It appears that there is a mistake in rating the suitability since "suitable" is specified as (3.5-3.49) instead of (3.5-4.49). Even after correcting that mistake, it is not really clear why the researchers chose a span of about 0.5 only to indicate "not suitable at all" and "very suitable", and a span of 1 point for the others. In addition, we do not know how the researcher interpreted the range (2.5- 3.49) as "fairly suitable" since the midpoint of the scale (3) would definitely suggest that the students were uncertain of the suitability of the reading materials, rather than positive about them. In our study we will interpret the results only in terms of the scale that the participants actually responded to.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has defined and explained the basic concepts of the current study, locating them in relation to EGP, EAP, L2 reading, the notion of 'readiness' for reading at higher levels, especially in university disciplines, and the factors that affect EFL reading comprehension. The chapter has also shown the importance of the current study and how this study, while building particularly on two key earlier investigations, is nevertheless different from other related studies.

3 Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide details of the methodology of the current study, which took place in June - July 2013. It begins by explaining the research paradigms used in the study. Next we describe the research sites and the rationale behind selecting them. After that, a detailed description of the data collection method, the participants, the research instruments, and the pilot study will be provided. Next the procedures used for data collection and analysis will be enumerated. Finally, the ethical considerations are discussed.

3.2 Research paradigms (Frameworks)

This research draws on both interpretive and positivist paradigms, in order to investigate the RTs used at the three different educational levels (secondary level, preparatory level, and first year university level) and the students' and their teachers' perspectives on these reading texts (RTs), and to explore to what extent the RTs at each level prepare the learners for the next level.

Interpretivism is described by Schwandt (2007, p.160) as “an approach that assumes that the meaning of human action is inherent in that action, and the task of the inquirer is to unearth that meaning”. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.22) support the use of this approach in educational research as it emphasizes uniqueness of individuals and proposes that a single situation or event could be seen from different perspectives and that the problem of a study needs to be investigated through the participants' eyes, not only the researcher's. The interpretivist approach seeks deep understanding of the meaning of the participant's thoughts,

acts, and experiences, understanding the context within which participants act, and the processes by which events and actions take place, telling us from an emic viewpoint why they have happened (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Maxwell, 1996; Sarantakos, 1997). This involves describing the participants or the setting by looking at the issue from different perspectives, analysing the data into categories, and then making the interpretation or drawing conclusions about the meaning (Wolcott, 1994). The use of the interpretivist approach in this study has enabled me to explore the students' and their teachers' perceptions regarding how well the RTs at lower level prepare the students for the next or higher educational level.

The positivist approaches, on the other hand, believes that "reality is out there, independent of human consciousness, is objective... and unchangeable laws, and can be realised through experience" (Sarantakos, 1997, p. 36). This approach is also used in this study since our prime focus is on the RTs themselves, for example, the vocabulary and the grammar used in the texts, and how these may help in preparing the students to the reading at the next educational levels. We also regard it useful to use objective measures such as readability formulas to examine and compare the RTs of the three educational levels.

This research exploited both paradigms (positivist and the interpretive) in order to gain a full picture of the extent to which the RTs at one level have prepared for the next one. If we used only the positivist paradigm, through the RT analysis and the closed items of the questionnaires, we would not discover why the students and their teachers think the texts are helpful or not in preparing for reading at the next education level. Therefore, the use of the interpretive paradigm is needed, in a complementary way, to further investigate the students' and their teachers' perspectives through the open-ended items in the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews. In this way this study will include both "depth and detail" and "breadth and comparative information" (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 437).

3.3 Research method

This study adopted mixed research methods, as described by many researchers (e.g. Borkan, 2004; Creswell, 2003), in that both qualitative and quantitative instruments were used for data collection and analysis. Quantitative data were collected from corpus analysis of RTs at each education level and the students' questionnaires. Qualitative data were gathered both from the students' questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students at each education level. This study followed the sequential mixed methods design (Creswell, 2003) in which the interviews were conducted first with the students, followed by the questionnaires, to prevent the students from using the information suggested by the questionnaire stems when responding in interviews.

Employing mixed methods helps to avoid the pitfalls of each separate research instrument (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). According to Greene et al. (1989), there are several advantages of using mixed methods over using a single method: 1) triangulation, 2) complementarity, 3) initiation, 4) development, and 5) expansion. In the current study, the first three advantages out of these five were exploited: triangulation, initiation and complementarity.

By using triangulation, the strengths of one method of data collection compensate for the weaknesses of the others (Malderez, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In line with Patton (2002), the current study makes use of data triangulation, where different data sources were used; i.e. both students' and teachers' views from the three educational levels, and methodological triangulation, where different methods were used, i.e. questionnaires, interviews and text analysis. Figure 3.1 presents a visual illustration of the design of the study.

Regarding complementarity, the quantitative data consisted of responses to close-ended questionnaire items, which revealed the students' perceptions about the RTs at their educational

level; in addition, there was an analysis of the language and content of those RTs. The qualitative data consisted of responses to open ended questionnaire items, interviews with the students and their teachers. Hence, the qualitative data complemented the quantitative data by providing a full understanding of the students and the teachers' reasons behind their perceptions.

Regarding the purpose of initiation, studies may aim to use methods in such a way as to bring into the open dissonance and conflict. The current study also aimed to do this by employing methods "that are significantly different from one another in stance, form, and perspective" (Greene, 2007, p. 103). In the current study, the RTs from the three educational levels were analysed, and the students' and their teachers' perceptions were gathered to examine the agreement and conflict between the information from these different sources.

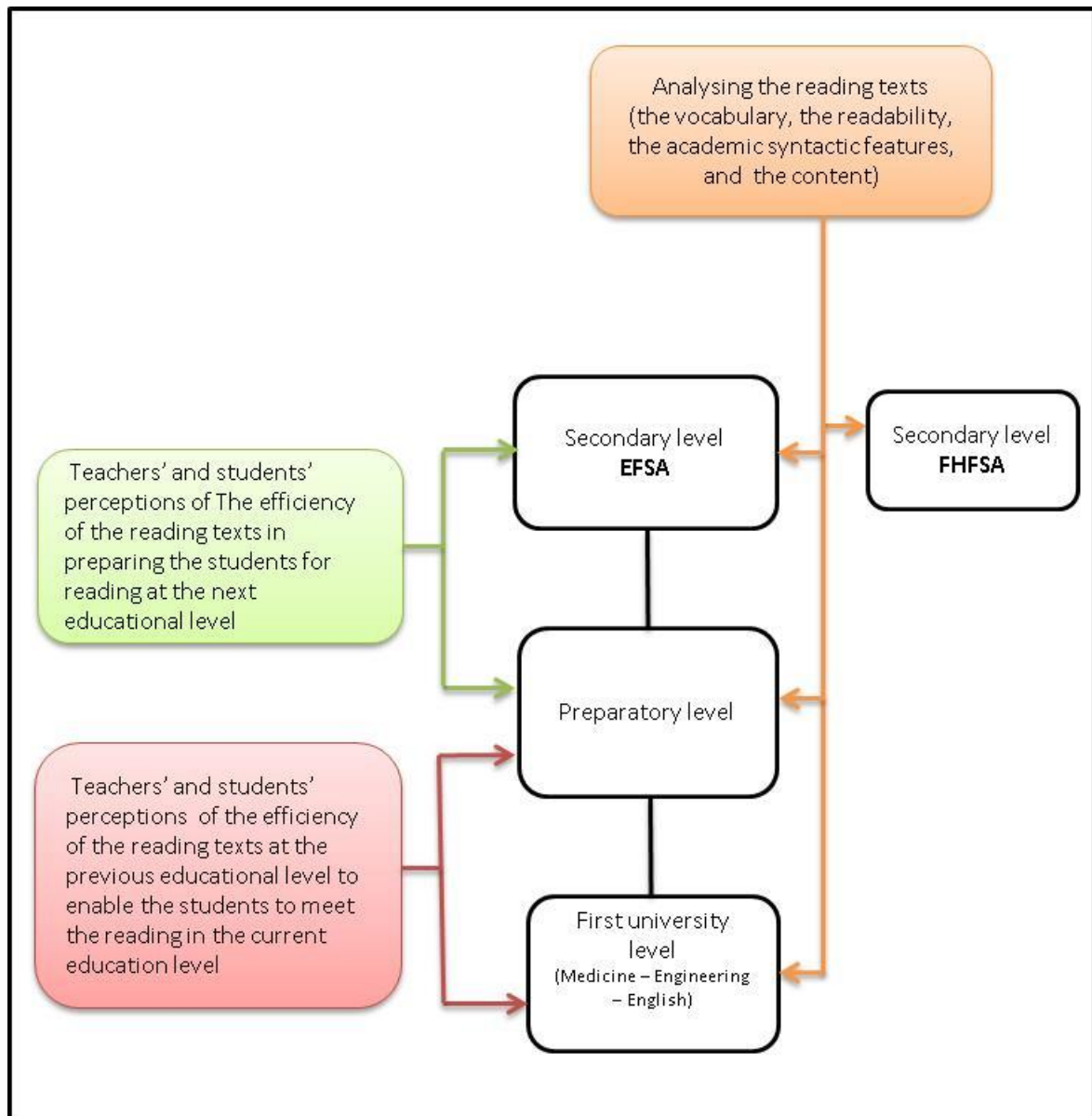


Figure 3.1: The framework and the design of the study

3.4 The research sites

This study was conducted in two main sites: the Northern Borders University and two secondary schools.

3.4.1 Northern Borders University (NBU) in KSA

The study was conducted in the NBU, which is the only university in the Northern Borders Province in Saudi Arabia. This university has three campuses in different cities in the Northern Province (Arar, Traif, and Rafha). It is representative of all the universities in the KSA as they follow a similar policy that was assigned by the Ministry of Education (MoE), and most of the students are local students who graduated from state schools. The NBU was chosen for several reasons. First it was a practical choice, since it is where I live, which helps to save time as I do not need to travel to other cities to collect data. Other reasons are my familiarity with the university and its accessibility. I worked at the university and I still had good connections with many of the academic staff there at the time of the study, and it was therefore easier for me to interview some of the staff and access the essential resources to conduct the study.

3.4.2 The Secondary schools

Regarding the secondary schools, two male state secondary schools (King Fahad Secondary school and Abin Baz secondary school) in Arar city in the Northern Province were chosen for the following reasons:

Firstly, the researcher had a good relationship with the English teachers and the headmasters of the selected schools, which facilitated the required research. Some other schools were reluctant to allow interviews with their teachers, and teachers themselves did not appear happy with the prospect.

Secondly, both of the schools were following the government syllabus. Each school used a different English series; King Fahad Secondary school used the *English for Saudi Arabia* series (EFSA), and Abin Baz secondary school used both English series (EFSA and FHFSA). In the

latter, EFSA was used for Year 2 and Year 3 whereas FHFSA had recently been adopted and was only used for Year 1 at the time of data collection. Contacting these two schools allowed the researcher to collect the two English series textbooks easily since the study aimed to compare between the RTs in each series.

It is noteworthy that these are in fact the only two series used in the Northern Borders Province in the KSA at this level. Other providences in the KSA may employ other English series beside the EFSA at this level.

3.5 Data collection methods overview

In most educational research studies the research questions suggest the method(s) that should be employed. According to Crotty (1998, p. 3), methods are “the techniques or procedures used to gather and collect data related to some research questions or hypotheses”. In this study, the principal instruments used for data collection were a questionnaire, a semi-structured interview, and document collection and analysis.

The questionnaire was designed for the students and had three versions: one each for secondary level students, preparatory level students and first year students. The interview had six versions: three for the students at each educational level, and three for the teachers at the three educational levels. Software programmes were used for analysing the corpora of RTs that were gathered from the three educational levels. Table 3.1 below shows each of the research questions vis-à-vis the research instruments and the number of participants used to help answer each research question.

Table 3.1: The research questions vis-à-vis research instruments and participants

Research Question	Instruments	Participants
1- What differences are there between English reading texts in each English series at secondary level, at preparatory level, and in the first year subject class? (Comparison features: general and academic vocabulary, readability [word length, and sentence length], academic grammatical features, length of the text and content). Do the earlier levels successfully prepare learners for later levels?	Compleat Lexical Tutor v.6.2, Range, MonoConc Pro 2.0, Flesch-Kincaid , Reading Ease, Goleman-Liau Index, SMOG Index, Gunning-Fog Score Plus manual	Sec. corpora (EFSA, FHFS), Prep. Corpus, First year corpora (Med. Corpus, Engn. Corpus, Eng & tra Corpus)
2- To what extent do Saudi secondary level students and their English teachers think that the reading texts in the secondary English textbooks, EFSA, will prepare students for reading at the preparatory level? Why (not)?	Ss' questionnaire	25 Sec.Ss.
	Ss' interviews	5 Sec.Ss.
	Ts' interviews	4 Sec.Ts.
3- To what extent do Saudi preparatory level students and their English teachers think that reading texts in EFSA secondary English textbooks have prepared the students for their reading at the preparatory level? Why (not)?	Ss' questionnaire	25 Prep.Ss.
	Ss' interviews	5 Prep.Ss.
	Ts' interview	4 Prep.Ts
4- To what extent do Saudi the preparatory level students and their English teachers think that the reading texts at the preparatory level will prepare students for the reading at their first year university level? Why (not)?	Ss' questionnaire	25 Prep.Ss.
	Ss' interviews	5 Prep.Ss.
	Ts' interview	4 Prep.Ts
5- To what extent do Saudi first year university students and their teachers think that the reading texts at preparatory level have prepared the students to read English medium textbooks in their subjects effectively? Why (not)?	Ss' questionnaire	25 Med.Ss, 25 Engn.Ss, and 25 Eng.Ss
	Ss' interviews	5 Med.Ss, 5 Engn.Ss, and 5 Eng.Ss
	Ts' interview	4 Med.Ts, 4 Engn.Ts, 4 Eng.Ts

3.6 Participants

3.6.1 Students

A number of the male students were sampled from three educational levels: secondary, preparatory, and first year university level (see Table 3.1). All participants were volunteers but we have no reason to suppose that they differed from a stratified random sample of each population.

At the secondary level, for the questionnaire, twenty five final grade secondary Saudi students (aged 17-18) participated. All these students were studying at the state schools (Abin Baz and King Fahad secondary schools) and they had all studied EFSA textbooks. Five of those students were asked to volunteer to participate in the interviews. Since the FHFSA had only recently started to be employed in some schools at the time of data collection, the questionnaire and interview part of this study covered only perceptions of EFSA RTs. All students who had studied in private schools at any educational level, or in English institutions (whether inside Saudi Arabia or abroad) were excluded, since they were likely to have received a different amount of English tuition and been exposed to additional different RTs.

Regarding the preparatory level students, twenty five (aged 18-20) volunteered to participate in this study. They had all graduated from secondary state schools and had studied English for 7 years, since grade six, and they all had studied the EFSA English series. Similarly, all students who had studied in private schools, or joined English institutions, were excluded from the study. For the students' interviews, five students from those students were asked to volunteer.

For the first year university level, twenty five medicine students, twenty five engineering students, and twenty five English and translation students (aged 19-21) volunteered to respond to the questionnaire. Five students from each discipline were asked to volunteer to participate in

the interview. The reason for choosing first year students from the Medicine College, Engineering College, and English & Translation Department to be the target populations of this study is that these were the only English-medium majors in the NBU.

It is important to mention that all the student participants in this study had had similar learning experiences at elementary and intermediate school levels, and received similar instruction at the secondary level with the same EFSA textbooks, and those at the preparatory and first year university level also had had similar instruction and materials at the preparatory level. Hence, the samples of the study reflect populations with a similar educational experience widely found in Saudi Arabia.

In response to the first section of the questionnaire (see 3.9.2), students provided the researcher with background information about their English reading in general outside of their textbooks. The following section presents a summary of this information.

3.6.1.1 The students' background in reading in English

Figure 3.2 demonstrates the students' attitude (on a 1-5 rating scale) towards reading in the English language, reported reading outside English textbook materials, and the extent to which they reported facing difficulties in reading English outside their class materials, where 1 indicates that "like it a lot", "read a lot", and "a lot of difficulty", and 5 indicates "I do not like it at all", "not at all", and "no difficulty at all".

The results show that the secondary level students showed the least positive attitude towards reading in the English language compared with the other groups (mean rating on average 4 out of 5), followed by the first year engineering students and then the first year medicine students. This may be due to the difficulty that they face in reading English outside their textbook

materials, at, on average, 2.08 for secondary level, 1.8 for the engineering students, and 1.96 for medicine students, out of 5. It can be clearly seen in Figure 3.2 that over all the groups the positive attitude to reading English was reportedly higher where the reported difficulty in reading English was lower.

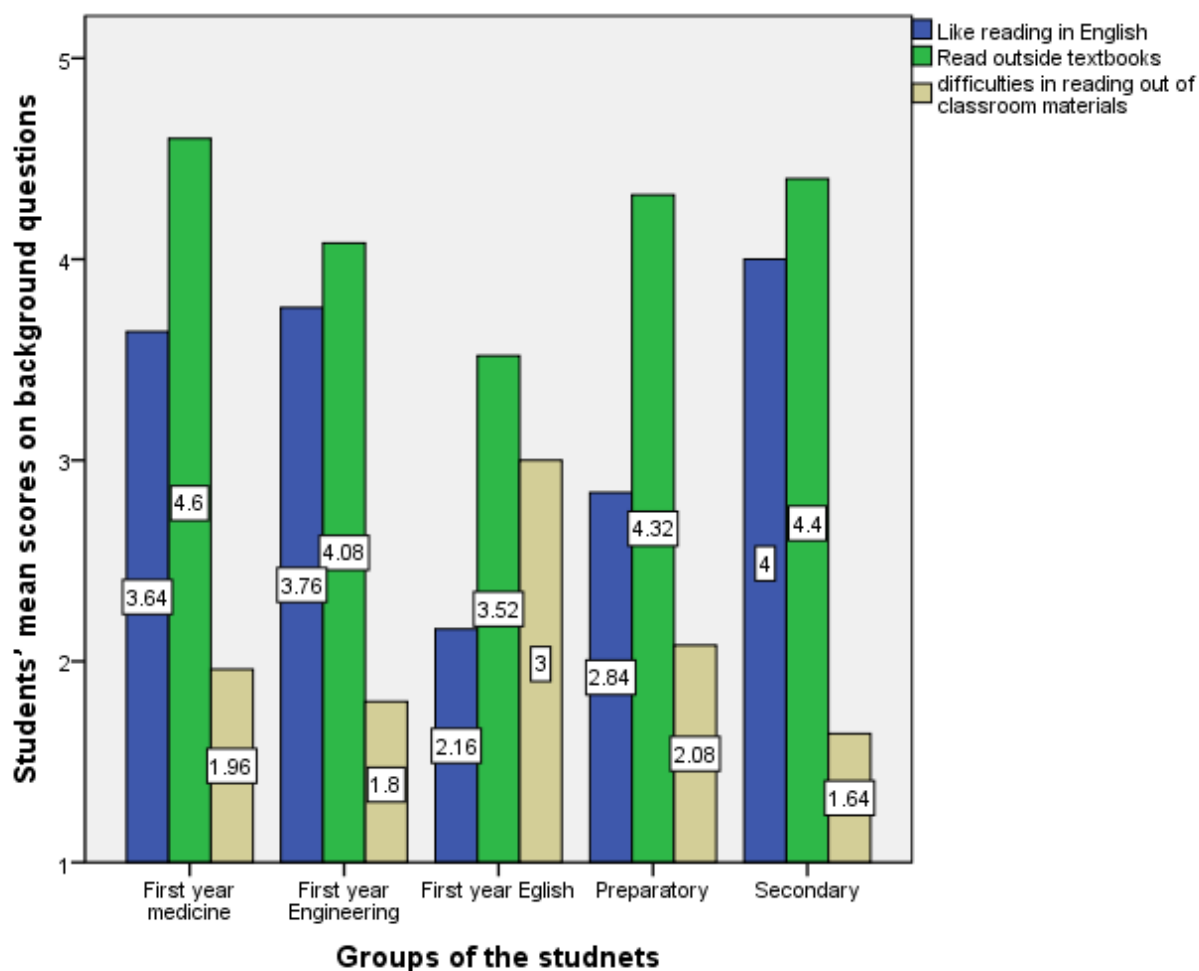


Figure 3.2: The students' attitude towards English language and their English reading outside their textbooks

In addition, students in all the groups reported reading outside their textbooks on average above the midpoint of the scale (3), though first year English students reported doing this the most. Again we see that the more difficulty was reported in reading English, the smaller the amount of extra reading of English was reported. For example, the first year English and translation group

reported reading outside their textbooks more than the other groups did and they also reported the least difficulty in reading English compared with the other groups. These results are supported by what was reported by students. For example, one student commented, “I don’t read in English outside my textbooks, because it is too difficult and I cannot understand” (**Sec. S 1**).

The most important indication of the previous results is that, apart from first year English and translation students, it can be noted that students in all groups reported very limited reading outside their classroom materials, above 4 on the scale. Hence the analysis of the textbooks, which is a key part of the study, may be seen as a valid representation of what texts they read. In other words, the study is unlikely to have overlooked any potential exposure of the students to English reading outside textbook reading, which may have helped prepare them for the next level.

Finally, we can see that, over time, the difficulties that students reported in reading outside their classroom English materials noticeably decreased for English department students but remained largely unchanged for all the rest. In the area of attitudes towards English, it is expected that English language students would show a positive attitude towards reading in English; however, it is surprising that first year engineering and medicine students showed a less favourable attitude to reading in English after the preparatory level. This might be due to the difficulty that these students meet.

3.6.2 Teachers

The teachers’ sample was composed of EFL teachers at the secondary stage and preparatory level. In addition, the study also targeted the disciplinary teachers who taught first year students their major subjects through the medium of English.

Four English teachers who taught EFSA in the two secondary schools and four English reading teachers from the preparatory level voluntarily agreed to be interviewed. In addition, four teachers who taught their subjects in English from each selected discipline, namely English & translation, medicine and engineering, also voluntarily agreed to take part in the interview. Tables 3.2 - 3.4 show the profiles of all teachers who were involved in this study.

Table 3.2: Secondary English Teachers' profiles

Pseudonym	Nationality	1st Language	Other language	Teaching Years	Qualifications
Sec.T1	Saudi	Arabic	English	3 Years	BA in English with specialism in Education
Sec.T2	Saudi	Arabic	English	6 Years	BA in English with specialism in Education
Sec.T3	Saudi	Arabic	English	3 Years	BA in English with specialism in Education
Sec.T4	Saudi	Arabic	English	4 Years	BA in English with specialism in Education

Table 3.3: Preparatory English teachers' profiles

Pseudonym	Nationality	1 st Language	Other languages	Qualifications	Teaching experience		Course Taught
					In KSA	Total	
Prep.T1	Tunisian	Arabic	English, French, and Italian	MA in Applied linguistics	3 years	6 years	General English
Prep.T2	Indian	Malayalam	English, Hindi	MA in ELT	5 years	20 years	General English
Prep.T3	Indian	Urdu	Hindi, English, and Persian	MA , PhD in English literature	3 years	5 years	General English
Prep.T4	Tunisian	Arabic	English and French	MA in ELT	3 years	8 years	General English

Table 3.4: Subject teachers' profiles

Pseudonym	Nationality	1st language	Other language	Teaching experience		Qualifications	Subjects taught
				In KSA	Total		
Med.T1	Indian	Hindi	English	2 years	7 years	PhD in Pharmacology	Pharmacology
Med.T2	Pakistani	Urdu	English	3 years	14 years	FCPS equal to a PhD	Medicine
Med.T3	Egyptian	Arabic	English	3 years	7 years	PhD in Biology	Biology
Med.T4	Egyptian	Arabic	English	2 years	8 years	PhD in Biochemistry	Biochemistry
Engn.T1	Jordanian	Arabic	English	4 years	11 years	MSc in Electrical Engineering	Intro. to Electrical Engineering
Engn.T2	Egyptian	Arabic	English	3 years	16 years	PhD in Mechanical Engineering	Intro. to Mechanical Engineering
Engn.T3	Egyptian	Arabic	English	3 years	13 years	PhD in Civil Engineering	Intro. to Civil Engineering
Engn.T4	Egyptian	Arabic	English	5 years	8 years	PhD in Mechanical Engineering	Intro. to Mechanical Engineering
Eng.T1	Sudanese	Arabic	English	10 years	15 years	MA in ELT	Language skills
Eng.T2	Pakistani	Urdu	English	10 years	13 years	Ma in literature	Language skills
Eng.T3	Egyptian	Arabic	English	8 years	14 years	PhD in literature	Language skills, literature
Eng.T4	Saudi	Arabic	English	4 years	4 years	MA in Applied linguistics	Language skills, linguistics

3.6.3 Textbook selection

The primary sources for the text analysis part of the study were the textbooks. Here we describe the selection of these sources, and in section 3.9.3 we describe how the texts for each corpus were chosen from these sources.

The researcher first checked what sources of English reading materials were used at the three educational levels and the student were required to read, assigned either by the Ministry of Education (for secondary school) or by the university (for the preparatory and the first year university level).

At the secondary level, it was found that in the Northern Province the students were mainly exposed to either EFSA or FHFSA EFL English textbooks. In this study we analysed only the RTs in both English series. However, more attention was paid to EFSA in the account of the students' and teachers' perceptions, as FHFSA was only recently used. The number of textbooks and the distribution of the books of each series over the three years of secondary school are shown in Table 3.5. Some RTs were found in the workbooks, and these were also taken into account.

Table 3.5: The distribution of English textbooks from each series over the three years of secondary school in Saudi state schools

Name of series	EFSA		FHFSA	
	Students' book	Workbook	Students' book	Workbook
Year One	2	0	2	2
Year Two	2	0	2	2
Year Three	2	2	2	2
Total	6	2	6	6
Total number of books	8		12	

At the preparatory level, it was found that in the NBU the *Top Notch* EFL textbooks were the only source of reading regardless of students' subsequent major disciplines in the first year of university. This English series consists of four levels, and each level contains two textbooks, so all eight textbooks were selected for this study.

For the first year university level, three FYU level corpora were constructed. Each corpus represented one discipline. The size of each first year corpus was not arbitrarily chosen, as we will explain later in this chapter in section 3.9.3.

It was found in the English and translation department that the students in the first year of their major basically studied the four skills, speaking, listening, writing, reading, which is rather more like a continuation of the preparatory level than embarking on the subject matter of the major. Therefore, for the English & translation discipline, due to the limited number of the English Reading Textbooks, it was decided to select all these textbooks. Medicine and engineering involved a much wider range of reading material, although for the purposes of the research, so as to achieve a balanced representation, it was important to have a similar amount of words in each corpus at the first year university level. Hence it was necessary to obtain similar sized corpora for medicine and engineering. Therefore, the researcher followed a series of steps in order to select textbooks to build the other two corpora of first year university textbooks representing the engineering and medicine disciplines.

1. All the materials from these disciplines that potentially constitute data for this study were identified, which were all the English-medium textbooks that students were required to read in whole or in part.
2. The textbooks that were chosen were taught to most students in the field regardless of their sub-speciality. This condition mainly addresses the Engineering discipline as there are a number of sub-specialities such as electrical, chemical, civil engineering taught in the university. However, there are some courses taught for all students in the engineering college.

3. As it was essential in this study to analyse the texts that first year students were most likely to read, the researcher identified the textbooks that were considered by subject teachers as main books in the first year for each discipline.
4. Finally, four to six books were chosen according to accessibility, and the number of texts they contained, since there were some books, especially in the engineering field, which were full of numbers, tables, equations, and very limited text. Those textbooks were not selected as they needed more time and effort for scanning and editing.

Table 3.6 shows a summary of all names of the textbooks that were selected in each corpus at the three educational levels.

Table 3.6: The textbooks used for the corpora

The education level		The selected textbooks
Secondary level		EFSA English series
		FHFSA English series
Preparatory level		Top Notch English series
First year university level	English and translation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interaction one reading (Gold Ed.)(Kirn, & Hartmann, 2007a) 2. Interaction two reading (Gold Ed.) (Kirn, & Hartmann, 2007b)
	Medicine	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clinical Anatomy by Regions (Snell, 2007) 2. Biochemistry Lippincott's Illustrated Reviews: (Harvey & Ferrier, 2010) 3. Junqueira's Basic Histology: Text and Atlas (Mescher, 2010) 4. Robbins Basic Pathology (Kumar, et al., 2007)
	Engineering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mechanics of Materials (Beer et al., 2002) 2. Engineering Mechanics: Statics (Pytel & Kiusalaas, 2009) 3. Introduction to Engineering Design: The workbook (McNeill et al., 1999) 4. Basics of Engineering Economy (Blank & Tarquin, 2007) 5. The Science and Engineering of Materials (Askeland, 1996) 6. Thermodynamics (Kreuzer & Tamblyn, 2010)

3.7 Research instruments

3.7.1 Interview

An interview is a conversation between two persons started by the researcher with an explicit purpose in which the researcher aims to gain relevant information from the participants in the research (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Robson, 2002). In the interview, the researcher tries to find out the participants' behaviours, experiences, and perspectives on certain issues regarding the research in order to gain a clear and deep understanding of the situation (Kvale, 1996:1).

Many researchers have shed light on the advantages of using interviews for collecting research data (Cohen et al, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002; Robson, 2002). One of the important advantages is that, through the interview, researchers can gain important data for the research about the participants on matters that are not directly visible, such as personal beliefs, experiences, opinions, thoughts (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Another important advantage of the interview is that it helps to minimize the risk of misunderstanding questions, as the researcher during the interview can give more clarification where needed, which will improve the quality of the data gathered.

There are three types of interviews which are commonly employed in education research, the structured interview, semi-structured interview, and unstructured interview (e.g. Nunan, 1992; Wallace, 1998). These types vary in the degree of flexibility of the interview, and the degree to which the interview is standardised across different respondents and situations (Punch, 1998: 175). The similarity of the structured and semi-structured interviews is that both of them require a pre-arranged set of interview questions, but the unstructured interview does not. However, they are different in other aspects. Although the semi-structured interview has pre-arranged interview questions, they are only used as guidance for the interview. In other words, the

questions could be amended by the researcher according to his/her view of what is most appropriate, in the context of previous responses, and questions could be added, removed, or paraphrased (Cohen et al., 2007). For this study, the semi-structured interview was employed due to its flexibility, whereby the researcher can probe more deeply than by a questionnaire (See Appendix E). In the semi-structured interview “the interviewer provides guidance and direction, but is also keen to follow up interesting developments and let the interviewee elaborate on certain issues” (Dornyei, 2007: 136). In other words, the interview questions of the current study have been prearranged, but room was allowed for amendment, omitting and adding of other questions.

On the other hand, some researchers criticize the interview as a means of data collection. For example, Cohen et al (2007), Robson (2002) and Mason (2002) argue that interviewing is time-consuming in all its phases: preparation, the interview process, transcribing, and the analysis. In this study there is another stage which is translation, as some of the interviews are in Arabic language and the researcher translated them into English after transcription. In addition, some factors could affect the validity of the data gained in the interview, such as interviewer’s bias, and uncooperative participants. Though these concerns and limitations are reasonable and worth taking into account, the interview is an ideal method of gathering data about a person’s views and perceptions of the world where s/he lives (Cohen et al, 2007). As the current study aims to investigate the students’ perspectives and teachers’ views at different levels of study in some depth, using the interview was seen as appropriate.

In the current study, six versions of interview questions were designed, three versions for students at three educational levels, and the other three for the teachers at the different educational levels.

3.7.1.1 Teacher interviews

It is important to mention that all teacher participants were given the choice to take the interview in Arabic or in English although they were encouraged to use their first language, if it was Arabic, in order for them to express themselves freely.

The secondary English teachers' interview focused on three main issues after obtaining the background information (e.g. nationality, languages they speak, teaching experience):

1. their opinions about the RTs,
2. their perception of the students' reading level, and
3. their opinion on the suitability of the RTs at the secondary level in preparing the students for the next educational level (preparatory level).

The interviews with the preparatory teachers sought to gain their opinions on a variety of key issues related to the study. After gathering demographic information, the preparatory level teachers were asked about:

1. their opinions about the students' reading level and about the readiness of the students for the preparatory level reading,
2. the suitability of the reading at the secondary level in preparing the students for the reading at preparatory level, and
3. their opinion on the suitability of the RTs at the preparatory level help in preparing the students for their first year reading in different disciplines.

Finally, the first year teachers' interviews aimed to gain their opinions from three different disciplines about:

1. their opinions about the students' reading level in their disciplines,
2. their views regarding the students' readiness for reading their textbooks in the first year, and
3. their opinion about the suitability of the RTs at the previous level in preparing the students to meet the reading demand in their disciplines.

See Appendix F which shows all the interviews framework questions for each level.

3.7.1.2 Student interviews

Although the questionnaires were used as the main instrument for gathering the data from the students, they were also interviewed for many reasons. First, it was thought that this would compensate for the risk that the students may not answer the open questions in the questionnaires properly. Secondly, the aim was to gain more information from the students regarding their views about the suitability of the RTs that they studied in preparing for the next educational level. Thirdly, the interview was necessary to obtain greater detail about the students' perceptions regarding their readiness to meet the reading demands at current educational level. Finally, it was hoped that the interview would afford more opportunity for the researcher to follow up interesting points.

As explained in Section 3.7.1, three versions of the interviews were designed for the students according to their educational level. All the student interviews were conducted in Arabic to allow the students to express themselves fluently. All the interviews started with asking about background information (e.g. age, name of the school), and their English learning experience (whether they had studied in an English institution, or abroad) to make sure that students matched the participant selection criteria (i.e. the target population). Student interviews discussed the similar points of the teachers' interviews (see Appendix G).

3.7.2 Student questionnaire

The questionnaire is a widely used instrument for data collection and presents participants with a number of items (questions or statements), and the participants are asked to respond to these items either by choosing from suggested answers, or by writing their own answers (Dornyei, 2007) or both, as in our study, where students were asked to choose from a scale and provide reasons behind their choice.

Questionnaires can be valuable in investigating participants' opinions, experiences and attitudes. Nunan (1992, p. 143) states that a questionnaire "enables the researcher to collect data in field settings and the data themselves are more amenable to quantification than discursive data such as free-form field notes, participants observers' journals, or transcripts of oral language".

There are three popular types of questionnaire that are widely used in the field of education. They are the open questionnaire, closed questionnaire and a mixture of both open and closed questionnaire (Nunan, 1992). Questionnaires with closed-ended items are simply coded and tabulated quantitatively without subjectivity. Moreover, Brown (2001) emphasized that closed items are characterized by giving uniformity across items with reference to the types and specificity of the data gained, are easy to administer and most likely to be answered by participants, and are almost objective. Open ended-items, on the other hand, are designed with the purpose of gathering qualitative data in written form from the respondents (Jackson & Trochim, 2002). In addition, open ended items may lead to identifying some interesting issues that had not been expected (Dornyei, 2007).

In this study a mixed closed and open questionnaire was constructed for students at the three levels. The closed-ended items were responded to on a scale from 1 to 5 that required respondents to choose one number on a semantic differential type of scale that best suited their

views. In this type of scale two adjectives or phrases (anchors) are written on each side of the scale for response to a statement or question.

The open ended items used in the questionnaire accompanied each closed item to provide the participants with a chance to write the reason(s) behind their choice. In addition, one question asked the participants to write any comments regarding RTs or anything that was related to the study. More explanation of the questionnaire items is provided later in this section.

The reasons for using the questionnaire and specifically a mixture of closed and open items for collecting the data from the students are as follows:

- Using a questionnaire enabled the researcher to access a larger number of students compared with the other methods of data collection, such as interviewing.
- Using this type of questionnaire with the semantic differential type of scale (e.g. easy...difficult) as well as open response items enabled the researcher to obtain mixed data (qualitative and quantitative data).
- It would be hard for the researcher to interview large numbers of students but the current study needed to gather students' perceptions from a reasonable sample at three different educational levels.
- Most of the students wanted to remain anonymous, but in the interview people could not be anonymous to the researcher.
- All the students had limited time in the school and university day yet this was the only convenient time during which they could be met.
- The researcher works in the same university as the university level students, and some students, as argued by Sudman and Bardburn (1982, cited in Cohen et al, 2007), might

not have been willing to discuss their problems face to face, talk about their level in English, and criticize the preparatory textbooks with the researcher.

Different questionnaires were used for each level: secondary, preparatory, and first year level (see Appendix E). The three questionnaires were quite similar in structure as they all included some similar sections. Table 3.7 shows the sections of the questionnaires and number of items.

Table 3.7: The student questionnaire items

Level	Section One Background info.	Section Two English reading in general	Section Three			Total
			Reading difficulties	Preparation for the preparatory level	Preparation for the FY level	
Secondary	4	3	6	8	-	21
Preparatory	8	3	6	8	9	34
First year	10	3	6	-	9 (Med-Engn.) 8 (Eng.& tra)	28 - 27

It should be mentioned that initially it was intended to investigate the reading difficulties that students encounter when reading the texts at each level. However, due to limitations of time and space it was decided after discussion with my supervisor to exclude this part from the current study.

The first section, in all the questionnaires, included questions which covered background information such as the number of years participants had been learning English, the number of English classes that they were taking at the time, which English series they had studied, and the exposure to English in any other contexts apart from the school. For the preparatory and first year university level, there were also questions about the types of English course, the name of major, and colleges, in addition to some questions for the first year students about the number of subjects that were taught through the English medium, and the number of hours of these subjects.

The second section dealt with the students' general English reading and their interest in reading in English (as discussed in Section 3.6.1). For example,

To what extent do you like reading in English?

Very much

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

Why?.....

Part one of the third section in the questionnaires dealt with the difficulties that students currently encounter in their reading. The differences between the questionnaires occur in the other parts in section three as follows:

For the secondary stage students, the questionnaire contained a second part in the third section with eight items asking their opinions regarding the extent to which their RTs will prepare them for the preparatory level in terms of vocabulary, grammar, text types, etc. For example,

In general, do you think that the English reading texts which you read in the secondary level will prepare you for the sort of reading at the preparatory level?

A lot

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

Please Give reasons for your

answer.....

.....

The preparatory level students' questionnaire included two further parts in the third section in addition to the first part that dealt with the reading difficulties. The second part in the third section dealt with the students' perceptions about how well the RTs at secondary level prepared them for reading at the preparatory level (8 items) in terms of the same aspects mentioned above. For example,

To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the secondary level developed your academic vocabulary (i.e. that are commonly used in academic context such as analysis) so that you can understand the reading texts at the preparatory level year?

A lot

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

Please give reasons for your answer.....

.....

The third part in the third section asked the students their views regarding how well the RTs at the preparatory level will help them to develop their reading ability so as to understand what they read at the first year university level. This section contained eight items. Each item covered one aspect of text. For example,

To what extent do you think that the topics of the reading texts at the preparatory level will prepare you for the sort of reading you do in the first year?

A lot

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

Please give reasons for your

answer.....

The first year students' questionnaire also contained a second part in the third section about their views on how the preparatory level reading had prepared them to understand the sort of reading they are required to do in the first year. This section contained 9 items in the questionnaires for the medical and engineering students while the questionnaire designed for the English and Translation students contained only eight items. This extra item for the medical and engineering students covered technical vocabulary as the English and Translation first year students are not exposed to technical vocabulary in their first year reading. For example,

To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory level developed your technical vocabulary (i.e. specialized terminology in your field) so that you can understand what you read in the first year?

A lot

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

According to McDonough and McDonough (1997:178), “Giving questionnaires in a second language might prove less useful than translating the questions into the respondents’ mother tongue(s)”. All the questionnaires were therefore translated into Arabic and instructions were also written and given in Arabic in order to avoid any misunderstanding that might affected the students’ responses, and it encouraged the students to write as much as they could. The translated versions were revised by two L1 Arabic EFL teachers who studied at PhD level at a British University, and all their comments were taken into consideration. In order to minimize the phenomenon that some students may try to please the researcher or attempt to meet his expectations, it was explained to the students that the questionnaire was not a test and it would not affect their achievement, and the students were also asked not to write their names on the questionnaires.

3.8 The pilot study

In order to examine the potential of the chosen instruments, check the flaws in the instruments, and identify and illuminate any misleading aspects and vagueness in the instruments (Kim, 2011, Beebe, 2007, Van Teijlingen et al., 2001), a pilot study was conducted prior to the main study data collection. Both the questionnaire and the interview instruments were subject to scrutiny in the pilot study.

3.8.1 The pilot study method

The pilot study was conducted at the beginning of June 2012 in the UK, in order to find out any weaknesses and therefore avoid errors before conducting the actual study, and to get first-hand experience of distributing the questionnaires and conducting the interviews.

As explained above, the questionnaires were distributed in Arabic, and most of the interviews were conducted in Arabic. Therefore, it was important to pilot the Arabic version of the questionnaires, and both versions (Arabic and English) of the interview questions, and to make sure that the questionnaires and the interview questions were translated into Arabic correctly.

The sample for the pilot study was as similar as possible to the target sample. For the interviews, three Saudi EFL teachers who were studying for a PhD in a British University were chosen to represent the Secondary and Preparatory English teachers (See Table 3.8). Two of them had experience in teaching English to foundation year students in Saudi Arabia, and the third one had experience in teaching English at the secondary level.

Table 3.8: English teachers in the pilot study

Pseudonym	Nationality	1st language	Qualifications	Subject taught	Teaching experience
P ET1	Saudi	Arabic	MA in Applied Linguistics	General English (preparatory level)	4
P ET2	Saudi	Arabic	MA in Applied Linguistics	General English (preparatory level)	2
P SECT1	Syrian	Arabic	MA in Applied Linguistics	English (secondary level)	7

For the subject teachers' interview, two subject teachers who were studying for a PhD at the same British University and had experience of teaching at a Saudi university, were also interviewed (see Table 3.9).

Table 3.9: Subjects teachers in the pilot study

Pseudonym	Nationality	1st language	Qualifications	Subject taught	Teaching experience
P Med 1	Saudi	Arabic	Msc biomedical science	Microbiology	5
P CS	Saudi	Arabic	Msc computer science	Computer Network	2

Finally, six Saudi students who were studying on English language programmes in the UK volunteered to complete the questionnaire and participate in the interview. Two students had just graduated from secondary school, two students had just finished the preparatory level, and two students were in the first year in King Saud University in the KSA. All the students came to the UK to study short English courses only, and they had received their prior education in the KSA.

Interviews and questionnaires were all administered face to face and individually.

3.8.2 The results of the pilot study

The pilot study was vital for the main study for several reasons:

1. I acquired direct experience of carrying out a research study and dealing with issues that arose, such as contacting the participants and obtaining their consent, and handling unexpected issues that occurred during the research.
2. It provided me with the chance to examine the interview questions, which resulted in an amendment to the Arabic version of the interview questions based on the teachers' responses. These changes were all related to structure and adding clarifying words. For example, the question "What are the difficulties that students encounter in their English reading?" was changed to "What are the difficulties that your students encounter during their English reading in their textbooks?"

3. From piloting the questionnaires, there emerged some questionnaire items which I needed to clarify. For example, in the item *To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the secondary level developed your awareness of various types of text (e.g. expository, and narrative) so that you can understand the reading texts at the preparatory level?*, the types of text needed to be explained by mentioning some examples of types of texts (e.g. narrative and expository texts).
4. In the pilot study, the students took 20 -35 minutes to complete the questionnaires, so in the actual study I was able to manage my time better during the period of data collection and confidently give the participants an estimate of the time needed for collecting their data.
5. The pilot study helped me to recognize that the students tended not to be cooperative in answering the open questions. Therefore, in the actual study I needed to encourage them to answer the open questions as fully as they could.
6. The pilot study helped me to recognize that the optimal time for the interviews was between 25 and 40 minutes, as the participants tended to get tired and did not reveal new information after that time. Therefore, in the actual study I was mindful of the time and made sure that the participants did not deviate from the focus of the study.
7. In transcribing the interview, I faced some difficulties related to the time and the effort needed for transcribing each interview and the clarity of the recorded voice. As I was planning to transcribe all the interviews of the main study, it was important to transcribe the interviews during the period of the data collection, and not leave them to the end of the fieldwork.

3.9 The procedure of main data collection

3.9.1 The interviews

All the interviews were conducted in June – July 2013.

At the beginning of each interview, I gave each interviewee full details about my study, then I explained to all interviewees that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage, and that all their names would be kept confidential. After this I asked them to sign the ethics consent form. In Section 3.11 more details about ethical issues are discussed. All the students and teachers fully cooperated and showed interest in contributing to my study. All the interviews were audio recorded.

All the students' interviews were carried out before distributing the questionnaires to the students, in order not to limit their thinking to the details in the questionnaire. All their interviews were conducted separately and in Arabic. All the student interviews took place in their educational institutions. For example, the secondary students' interviews were conducted in the one of the teachers' offices, and the university students' interviews took place in my office at the university or in the university library.

Regarding the teachers' interviews, the language of the interview was based on the interviewee's preference for Arabic or English, and all the Arab teachers preferred to use the Arabic language or sometimes switched between Arabic and English, whereas all the non-Arabic speakers used English. All the interviews took place in the teachers' offices at their work.

3.9.2 The questionnaire

As explained earlier (see section 3.7.2) three questionnaires were designed for the students at three different levels. All the questionnaires were translated into Arabic and were distributed by the researcher, who explained to the students the aims of the study, elucidated some points in the questionnaire items, and answered the students' questions to ensure the clarity of questionnaire items and eliminate any ambiguity.

At the secondary stage, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to 25 final year secondary stage students in one of the school classes during a normal school day, after obtaining permission from the administration. One of the school classes was booked to administrate the questionnaire. The participants were given enough time to complete the questionnaire, which took about 25 to 35 minutes. During this time the researcher remained in the classroom answering the students' questions.

The researcher agreed on the time and the place with the preparatory level students and each first year university level group. Each group of students was given the questionnaires in one of the classes in their building.

Similar to the secondary level, the researcher gave the instructions to preparatory and first year students and explained the items that might confuse the students and remained available in the classroom while the students completed the questionnaires. The students took about 30 to 40 minutes to answer the questionnaires. With reference to the completion rate, 100% of students completed the questionnaire

3.9.3 The collection of the reading texts for each corpus

Following the selection of textbook sources of reading material (see 3.6.3); this section presents the method of collecting the RTs from the textbooks. It is important first to explain that all the texts that were written in the textbooks and which the students were asked to read were considered as RTs, whether they came in the form of a paragraph, full text or dialogue.

3.9.3.1 The secondary reading text corpora

Two corpora were designed for the purpose of the current study, each containing all the RTs in each English series EFSA and FHFSA (see 1.4.2.1 and 1.4.2.2 for more details about each English series). Given the limited size of the secondary textbooks, the researcher was able to analyse all the RTs at this educational level (i.e. the entire relevant populations of texts).

All the RTs from all the eight EFSA and twelve FHFSA textbooks used at secondary level in Saudi Arabia were scanned⁶ and then edited by removing pictures and numbers from the scanned pages. The texts were saved as text files after careful editing which included removing the pictures, tables, diagrams, and numbers. As a consequence, we had two text files, each one containing the edited RTs for each secondary English series (EFSA and FHFSA). Table 3.10 shows the number of the RTs and their distribution over the secondary schools years, the average length of the RTs, and the total amount of word tokens in each secondary corpus.

⁶ Omnipage 18 OCR software was used.

Table 3.10: Content of the secondary level reading text corpora

Year of secondary school	EFSA		FHFSa	
	Number of texts	Total word count	Number of texts	Total word count
1	24	4495	67	14017
2	24	14195	76	18232
3	14	5534	45	18167
Total	62	24,224	188	50,416

3.9.3.2 The preparatory level reading text corpus

Due to the limited number of the English textbooks used at the preparatory level, all the RTs in all the textbooks were scanned and saved in one text file after careful reading and editing. As was explained earlier in section 3.6.3, the *Top Notch* English series consists of 8 textbooks for four levels starting from fundamentals A (level 1) to 3B (level 4); see Chapter one Section 1.5.1 for more details about this English series. The preparatory level RT corpus was composed of 191 RTs with a total of 24071 word tokens (see Table 3.11).

Table 3.11: The content of preparatory level reading text corpus

The textbooks series	The number of books	Number of texts	Total words (token)
Top Notch	8	191	24071

3.9.3.3 University first year reading materials corpora

As explained earlier in section 3.6.3, all the RTs found in the English Reading textbooks that are used in the first year in the English & Translation Department were scanned and saved in one text file. On the other hand, the Medicine and Engineering corpora were compiled by scanning samples from a range of selected textbooks to make up similar sized corpora. All the samples

were checked and edited by removing the numbers and pictures. Each corpus was saved in one text file. The composition of these three corpora can be seen in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12: The Content of the first year reading text corpora

Major discipline	Total word Tokens
English	34,272
Medicine	34,275
Engineering	34,355

3.10 Data Analysis

3.10.1 Analysis of the questionnaires

For the closed response items in the questionnaires, a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) file was created, and all the participants' responses were entered in this file. They were calculated and graphs created for each item.

All the responses of the open-ended items in the questionnaire were analysed qualitatively, repeatedly reading them over and attempting to fit participants' responses into different themes and sub-themes as described for the interview analysis in the following section.

3.10.2 Analysis of interviews

Analysing qualitative data involves several stages. Creswell (2007, p.148) argues that qualitative data analysis consists of preparing and organising the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion.

Analysing qualitative data is an ongoing and iterative process as it involves the researcher moving back and forth repeatedly between the raw data and the coding process to examine the existing codes and construct new ones. In that stage of the study, the researcher aimed to identify the themes and patterns, and relate these patterns and meanings with the research questions of the study. In this study, thematic analysis was adopted to be the analytical lens for coding and interpreting the gathered data.

Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) as

a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently, it goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic.

The process of qualitative data analysis involved six stages of thematic analysis that are suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) as shown in Table 3.13. Full details of the application of each phase are provided later in this section.

Table 3.13: The stages of the qualitative analysis

No.	The phase	The description
1	Familiarise yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas
2	Generate initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systemic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3	Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4	Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic map" of the analysis
5	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6	Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis, selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

3.10.2.1 Becoming familiar with the data

The first stage started with transcribing the teachers' and students' interviews, and typing the students' comments and explanations from the questionnaires. In transcribing the interviews all the recorded utterances were transcribed. Not all Arabic interviews were translated to English at this stage as that required considerable time. Four interviews were translated and checked for accuracy by two translators. After that I started familiarising myself further with the data through reading the transcripts many times, and writing some general comments about the interesting issues in the data.

3.10.2.2 Generating initial codes

A code is defined by Robson (2002, p. 477) as a “symbol applied to a section of a text to classify or categorise it”. This symbol may be a phrase, a word, an abbreviation, or even a colour that signposts the occurrences of patterns in the data. By codifying a segment of original data, it is important that this segment is meaningful according to the problem of the study. In this current study, the constant comparison method was adopted for formulating and refining the codes.

Denscombe (2007, p. 99) states that constant comparison involves “comparing and contrasting new codes, categories and concepts as they emerge - constantly seeking to check them against existing versions”. After that codes are categorized together in groups to form themes that could be discussed according to the research questions.

In this stage, first, I had to identify the texts units that contain an idea related to the research questions of the study as suggested by Zhang and Wildemuth (2009). Thus, at this stage initial codes were generated, and these codes labelled chunks of information that were related to the general areas of my study, which is: the suitability of the RTs at the lower educational level in preparing the students for the reading at the next educational level and reasons behind their opinions.

It is important to mention that during the process of data analysis, these broad groupings (codes) were modified and revised, as will be described in the next section. Indeed, revision of the codes through deleting, combining, grouping, downgrading, or upgrading was conducted extensively throughout the data analysis. Furthermore, the amount of data was reduced by filtering out data that was not related to the focus of the study.

All the interviews were coded manually mainly because I found that the qualitative analysis programmes like Nvivo required additional time for training and at the time of the data analysis, the training course in such a programme was not readily available. (See Appendix H for examples of transcribed interviews).

3.10.2.3 Searching for themes

This phase involves reading and revising the codes that were generated in the earlier phase in order to identify important recurring broader themes. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.89) states that looking for themes

Involves sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded extracts within the identified themes. Essentially, you are starting to analyse your codes and consider how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme

As explained above, I began the data analysis by looking for material related to the main themes that were related to the focus of the study. This phase required more thinking about the links between the codes, themes and sub-themes, and arranging the codes into related themes in order to help myself to gain a clear picture of the data and construct a framework. At the end of this phase I tried to form “a collection of candidate themes, and sub-themes, and all extracts of data that [had] been coded in relation to them” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 90). An initial analysis framework was developed as is shown in Table 3.14.

Table 3.14: Initial Analysis Framework

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views of students' reading level • The suitability of RTs in preparing for the reading at the next educational level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive • Negative • The suitability of the RTs in the previous level in preparing for the current level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive • Negative |
|--|

3.10.2.4 Reviewing themes

After developing initial themes in the previous phase, it was necessary to evaluate and refine the initial themes. In this stage I followed Braun and Clarke's suggestion (2006:91), as two rules were taken into consideration during this evaluation process. I ensured that all the data in each theme was related to the themes meaningfully, and that it was different from other themes. Therefore, first, I reread the coded data within each theme, to make sure it shared a common idea and was meaningful. Second, I reread the entire data to evaluate whether the existing themes reflected and covered the full range of meaning in the data set. This helped me to code new data or recode the initial data in line with my refined understanding of the themes.

3.10.2.5 Defining and naming themes

After developing a suitable thematic map, in this phase, I reread the coded data in order to identify the importance of each coded theme for the research questions of the study. In addition, I tried to make the names of the themes reflect the sense of what each theme and sub-theme is about. This was done through presenting the themes to two colleagues and obtaining their feedback about them. At the end of this phase I ended up with a coding scheme that consisted of eight higher order themes and twenty eight sub-themes as shown in Table 3.15.

Table 3.15: Final Coding Scheme for the qualitative analysis of the student and teacher interview data and student questionnaire data

- Views about student reading ability in relation to the texts to be read
- Suitability of the secondary reading texts in preparing for the preparatory level
 - Secondary students' and teachers' views
 - Reasons for non-suitability
 - Limited numbers of texts
 - Limited types of texts
 - Lack of interest /relevant topics
 - Inappropriate length of texts
 - Inadequate grammar in the texts
 - Inadequate vocabulary level in the texts
 - Preparatory level students' and teachers' views
 - Reasons for suitability
 - Less demanding reading texts
 - Similarities between the reading texts at the two levels
 - Reasons for non-suitability
 - Inadequate vocabulary and grammar in the texts
- Suitability of the preparatory reading texts in preparing for the FYU
 - Preparatory level students' and teachers' views
 - Reasons for non-suitability
 - Lack of academic language and specificity
 - Limited number of reading texts
 - The low level of reading texts in length, vocabulary and grammar
 - First year medicine and engineering students' and teachers' views
 - Reasons for suitability
 - The adequate input of general vocabulary
 - Reasons for non-suitability
 - Differences in the reading task requirements (The purpose of reading)
 - Unsuitable length of the text
 - Lack of academic language and specificity
 - Lack of specificity of the topic
 - First year English students' and teachers' views
 - Reasons for suitability
 - The similarity of the RTs between the two levels
 - The level of the students' reading
 - Reasons for non-suitability
 - Inappropriate length of the RT at the preparatory level

3.10.2.6 Producing the report

In the last phase I tried to organize my findings and make sense of the original data by presenting them in a clear and understandable manner. I also tried to provide the reader with adequate evidence though embedding some translated extracts, and presenting the findings in relation to my research questions, as will appear later in the chapter five.

3.10.3 The analysis of the reading texts

In order to answer the first research question which concerns the comparison of the RTs at the three educational levels (secondary, preparatory, first year university level), an analysis of each comparison feature was performed separately.

3.10.3.1 General vocabulary comparison

A number of sub-questions were specified here as follows:

1. How do the six corpora of RTs differ in how much vocabulary of different BNC frequency bands they contain (as tokens, types and families)? Is there a graded progression of representation of vocabulary of different frequency bands across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for the vocabulary of texts at higher levels in these respects?
2. Does the amount of vocabulary in each corpus fit the BNC frequency band figures one might expect at that level given the amount needed to prepare readers to at some point read authentic general academic English texts with understanding (entailing 5000-8000 word families to achieve 95% coverage)?
3. For each corpus at each level, how many BNC frequency bands of words does a reader need to know (in part at least) in order to achieve 95% or 98% coverage of tokens in the

corpus and so efficient reading comprehension of texts of that corpus? Is the amount reasonable, given the texts that students read at prior levels and the amount of time available for learning?

4. How much specific vocabulary is shared between different corpora? What does this tell us precisely about how well texts at one level ensure coverage of tokens in texts at the next, and so ensure adequate comprehension? Is the actual load of new word types and families to learn at each level a reasonable one?
 - a. What percentages of tokens in higher level corpora consist of words that already occurred in the lower level one(s)? Is 95% or 98% coverage achieved for efficient reading?
 - b. Is the amount of new vocabulary available in texts at each level an appropriate amount in terms of vocabulary learning load?

To answer the first sub-question, Nation's Range program (http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/Publications/paul--nation/Range_BNC.zip) was used. As explained earlier, the selected RTs of each corpus were saved in one text file. Each file was processed through the program which produced a text file showing the number of word tokens, types and families of all the words in the RTs in each textbook series. It also distributed the word tokens, types and families of each of the textbooks into frequency bands, based on BNC vocabulary lists, which are presented in figures, and tables in the results chapter.

To answer the second sub-question, the files produced by Nation's Range program were again used; however, in this section, the word families and types that were represented from the first 5000 and 8000 word families, which are the targets that students need to know in order to obtain 95% or 98% coverage of academic texts, were counted in each corpus.

To answer the third sub-question, we also used the results obtained from the Range program. This time we counted for each corpus how many bands of words needed to be known in each corpus for a reader to reach the minimal reading comprehension threshold (95%) and the optimal one (98%). The off-list items would be assumed to be familiar in the EFSA, FHFSA, Prep, and Eng & trans corpora but not for the Med and Engn corpora.

The fourth sub-question targeted the actual number and the percentage of shared and non-shared vocabulary between each corpus at a lower educational level and each corpus at the higher educational ones. Two further sub-questions were posed. The first sub-question aimed to find the percentage and number of word tokens in each corpus of the higher educational level that are shared and not shared with the corpus at the lower education level. In order to achieve this, the `text_lex_compare` (Compleat lexical tutor website) program was used. First, we compared between each corpus that represented the secondary level (EFSA and FHFSA) and the Prep corpus. Second, we compared between the Prep corpus and each first year university level corpus (Eng & tran, Med, Engn). Finally, we compared between each secondary corpus combined with the Prep corpus (e.g. EFSA + Prep) and each first year university level corpus. The off-list was included as there was no program option that helped to exclude it.

Similar procedures were followed for the second sub-question, but more focus was put on the word types and families to find out the vocabulary learning load of expected new words in terms of word types and word families (i.e. word types and families that only occurred at the later educational level, and were not shared between the earlier and later one) in each corpus. These numbers were then assessed against known numbers of classroom hours available at each level to estimate the required learning rate. In order not to overestimate the number of shared and not shared types and families, it was decided to exclude the off-list in EFSA, FHFSA, Prep, and Eng & Tran corpora which mainly contained names and abbreviations that students may have easily

recognised, as we will see in Chapter four. By using `text_lex_compare` (CLT), it was not possible to obtain the shared or non-shared word families and types at one time, so each comparison was done twice: one to get the word families and the other to get word types that were shared with text 2 (which represented the corpus higher level). In order to exclude the off-list from the results from EFSA, FHFSa, Prep, and Eng & tran corpora, we copied all the results of the shared word types and families that were obtained from the `text_lex_compare` output when we compared between each secondary corpus and the Prep corpus, between the Prep and Eng and tran corpora, and between the combinations of each secondary corpus with the Prep corpus and the Eng and tran. Then we saved it in a separate file after editing it for each comparison. After that each saved file was processed in Range program (BNC) and the word types and families without the off-list were counted. Finally, we were able to calculate the number of shared and non-shared word types and families in each corpus that were under comparison, without the off-list.

It is worth mentioning that in this study we used the BNC rather than the other popular corpus (e.g. COCA) due to the following reasons: first, the BNC is based on British English and all the English textbooks that are used at pre-first year university levels in our context are designed and/or published in the UK. Second, this study aims to investigate the coverage of the 5000 most frequent word families and how many words of these occur in the RTs at school or preparatory level. These most frequent 5000 word families are based on the BNC as it is explained by some researchers (e.g. Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010). Use of the BNC, AWL, and the 5000 threshold is therefore a consistent choice in that all are UK oriented and all work with the notion of families (rather than lemmata).

3.10.3.2 Academic vocabulary

In the comparison of the academic vocabulary, the study aimed to answer the following sub-questions:

1. How do the six corpora of RTs differ in how much AWL vocabulary they contain (as tokens, types, and families)? Is there a graded progression of representation of AWL vocabulary across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for the vocabulary of texts at higher levels in these respects?
2. Does the amount of academic vocabulary as percentage in tokens in each corpus fit the figures one might expect at that level given the amount needed to prepare readers to at some point read both authentic non-academic texts (e.g. newspapers) and both general and specific academic texts with understanding?
3. How much specific academic vocabulary is shared between different corpora? What does this tell us precisely about how well texts at one level ensure coverage of tokens in texts at the next, and so ensure adequate comprehension? Is the actual load of new word types and families to learn at each level a reasonable one?

To answer the first and the second sub-questions, each corpus was saved as one text. Then each file was processed in the VP Classic v.4 profiler on the Compleat Lexical Tutor website to obtain the percentage in tokens of academic vocabulary in each corpus as well as the number of academic word tokens, types and families in each corpus. For the first sub-question we compared between the corpora in the three educational levels to see how the percentage (tokens) and number of academic words (tokens, types, families) varied in the RTs at the same educational level and how these figures progressed over the three educational levels.

For the second sub-question, we compared the percentages of the academic words (as tokens) in all the corpora with the percentages of academic words (as tokens) suggested by the research for each register [academic texts (8 – 10%), newspapers (4%), and fiction novels (2%)] to see which is the closest register to each corpus.

In order to answer the third sub-question, we needed to copy all the academic word types that appeared in the output of the VP Classic v.4 profiler for each corpus, and save and edit them (by removing numbers). Then we compared between each corpus at a lower educational level and each one at a higher educational level by using the `text_lex_compare` program. For example, all the academic words in EFSA were saved in one file (text 1), and all the academic words in the Prep corpus were saved in one file (text2). Then we processed these files with the `text_lex_compare` program to find out the shared and not shared word types and families. Finally, to find out the shared and not shared word types and families between each first year university corpus and the academic words at the previous levels, we combined the academic words in each secondary corpus (EFSA and FHFSA) with those in the Prep corpus (i.e. EFSA + Prep; and FHFSA + Prep), and then we processed each file in the VP Classic v.4 profiler in order to remove repetition of word types. After that we copied the academic word types again and saved each combined corpus (i.e. EFSA + Prep) in one file. After editing the file by removing the numbers, the academic word types of each combined corpus (i.e. EFSA + Prep) were copied and compared with the academic word types of each first year university corpus that we already had by following the same procedures that were explained earlier.

3.10.3.3 The readability comparison

In the analysis of the readability (and sentence length, and word length) of the RTs in each series (EFSA, FHFSA), we tried to answer the following important sub-questions:

1. How do the six corpora of RTs differ in readability (using standard measures)? Is there a graded progression of readability across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for higher levels in this respect?
2. How do the six corpora of RTs differ in mean sentence and word length? Is there a graded progression of these features across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for higher levels in this respect?

To answer the two sub-questions, each file that represented one corpus was uploaded to the free online website (<https://readability-score.com>) to calculate the readability level using different readability measures (i.e. Flesch–Kincaid readability formula, SMOG Index, Coleman-Liau Index, Gunning-Fog Score). Then the readability statistics and the average sentence and word length were produced.

3.10.3.4 The academic syntactic features comparison

The syntactic features that were selected were inspired by several works which investigated the academic register (Biber et al., 2002; Biber, 2006; Biber & Gray, 2010) and other works that focused on RTs analysis (e.g. Miller, 2011).

The syntactic features that were investigated in this study were those features that are commonly employed by academic writers in order to achieve compressed information packaging (see Chapter two, section 2.6.2, and Table 3.16 for more details). To guide the analysis of these syntactic features, we had one sub-question:

1. How do the six corpora of RTs differ in the amount of distinctively academic syntactic features they exhibit? Is there a graded progression of this amount across levels, as one

might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for the academic syntax they will meet at higher levels?

To answer this sub-question, all the files that contained the edited data were separately uploaded to be part of speech tagged one by one through using the free tag online service (Free CLAWS WWW tagger). Then, we saved that tagged data in a separate text file for each corpus according to the study purpose. After editing all the files by removing the unwanted symbols (such as underscores) (see Figure 3.3). Each file was transferred to MonoConc Pro 2.0, in order to identify the selected features manually through concordance searches of relevant tags, and frequencies were normed to frequency of occurrence per 1000 words. Mean scores were then calculated for feature occurrence in each corpus. For example, in order to get nominalizations you obtained a concordance for all words that are specified as NN and end in -tion, -ity, -ness, -ation, and -tion, then we checked these words and count them manually.

Table 3.16: The selected academic syntactic features with examples from the corpora

The academic features	Example
Postnominal modification	KSA <u>university</u> that hosted the international day conference is offering new scholarships for international students.
Finite relative clauses	(relative pronouns: which, who, that, whose, and whom)
Noun + <i>of</i> prepositional phrase	the financial statements provide all the financial <u>information</u> of the company
present participial	<u>Injuries</u> resulting from fire accidents are often severe. The <u>hospitals</u> providing free treatment for all citizens are improving their services
past participial	The <u>car</u> repaired by the mechanic is very old. The <u>gases</u> emitted from cars are polluting the environment.
Prenominal modification	
present participial	The boiling <u>point</u> of ethanol is 78.37 °C the Vanishing <u>Treasure</u> is a popular novel
past participial	There are plenty of refurbished <u>computers</u> in the stores. I received an unexpected <u>call</u> from the manager of the company.
attributive adjectives	the financial <u>statements</u> provide all the financial <u>information</u> of the company
noun + noun sequence	I bought a leather <u>bag</u> . Wildlife <u>adventure</u> is popular in south Africa.
Nominalization	When a verb or adjective is turned into a noun. In this study we count only the nominalization that ends with ity; ness; ation; and tion. Examples, ity (e.g. intensity) ness (e.g. carelessness) ation (e.g. demonstration) tion (e.g. selection).

3.10.3.5 Topic comparison

1. How do the six corpora of RTs differ in number and choices of text topics? Do topics match the declared aims for their level? Is there a graded progression of topics across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for the content they will need to read at higher levels?

First the titles of the RTs in each English secondary level English series textbook (EFSA, and FHFS), the preparatory level, and the three first year selected disciplines were gathered and listed manually by the researcher. These titles were then submitted to thematic analysis by reading them over repeatedly and attempting to group them into a smaller number of common themes or topics. E.g. the titles *Good health* and *Healthy habits* were grouped into a topic of *Health*. As far as possible the same topic labels were used for analysis of each corpus. Then the

number of different topics identified in each corpus was calculated, as well as the number of texts falling within each topic. Finally the number and nature of topics shared between levels could be examined.

3.11 Ethical issues

Before conducting this study, the researcher gained ethical approval from the University of Essex that enabled him to conduct the study. In addition to this, the researcher also obtained permission to conduct the study from the Dean of Preparatory year, the Dean of Arts, the Dean of Engineering, and the Dean of Medicine at the NBU and the two headmasters of the secondary schools (the sites of the research). These permissions allowed the researcher access to the participants to obtain all the data needed from the university and the schools.

There are a number of key ethical issues that needed to be taken into consideration when conducting this research. The first issue is the anonymity of the participants where possible: in this study all the questionnaire participants' details were kept anonymous since their names were not required to be given. Second, to ensure confidentiality for those participants whose names were known to the researcher, we promised that names would not be reported in the study or revealed to anyone and that no one would be allowed to access the raw data except the researcher. Therefore, the researcher used codes to refer to each participant, e.g. MEDT3, which represents Medicine teacher number three in the interview. Although the researcher used letters to indicate the college or the department, these codes did not reveal further information about the person such as nationality or individual identity.

Finally, since the participants' consent was required in written form, all the participants were asked to read and sign the voluntary informed consent form (see appendix I). All the participants

were informed that they had the right to withdraw at any time and at any stage of the study and that they could also ask any questions about the study. Regarding the data that was gathered, all the participants were also informed that the data would be only used for the purpose of the study.

There were no ethical issues with respect to the RTs as they were all in published sources so required no permission to be used.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a description of the methodology used in the current study. The present study follows the positivist and interpretivist paradigms and employs quantitative and qualitative methods. The human participants (teachers and students) were described, along with the sources from which the RTs were obtained. Instruments of both quantitative and qualitative data collection were described and justified, along with their procedures of administration and data analysis. We concluded with the ethical precautions taken.

4 Chapter Four: The reading texts at secondary level vs. in the preparatory year and first year of university

4.1 Introduction

One main aim of this study is to investigate whether the reading texts (RTs) at secondary level provide the students with sufficient input to help them to read what they will encounter in the preparatory year, and how far the RTs at the preparatory level also add to the students' knowledge to enable them to successfully read the academic texts that they will meet in the FYU major study. This chapter attempts to achieve this aim through investigating and comparing those texts that the students encounter at the three education levels.

In this chapter, the answer to the first research question will be presented.

RQ1: What differences are there between English reading texts in each English series at secondary level, at preparatory level, and in the first year subject class? (Comparison features: length of the texts, general and academic vocabulary, readability (word length, and sentence length), academic grammatical features, and content). Do the earlier levels successfully prepare learners for later levels?

This question deals with the comparison between the RTs at the three education levels: secondary school, preparatory year, and FYU level in three disciplines which are medicine, English and translation study, and engineering. In order to present the results clearly, the chapter is divided into five main sections corresponding to the main comparison features in this study. These features are 1) general vocabulary, 2) academic vocabulary 3) readability, 4) academic syntactic features, and 5) topics.

4.2 General Vocabulary Level

As explained earlier (Chapter three, section 3.10.3.1), in the analysis of the vocabulary of the RTs in the three educational levels, we try to answer four sub-questions as can be seen from the following subtitles in this section.

4.2.1 How do the six corpora of reading texts differ in how much vocabulary of different BNC frequency bands they contain (as tokens, types and families)? Is there a graded progression of representation of vocabulary of different frequency bands across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for the vocabulary of texts at higher levels in these respects?

Table 4.1: Progression across levels in terms of tokens

The educational level	Secondary level		Preparatory level	First year university level		
Corpus name	EFSA	FHFSA	Prep	Med	Engn	Eng & tran
Total number of word tokens	24,224	50,416	24,071	34,275	34,355	34,272
Total teaching hours available	288	288	400	-	-	64
Average word tokens to read per class hour	84.1	175.1	60.2	-	-	535.5
No. of reading texts	62	188	191	-	-	48
Average length of texts in word tokens	390.7	268.2	126	-	-	714

We first consider the progression in terms of word tokens (running words). As we see in Table 4.1, FHFSA texts contain slightly more than double the amount of words than EFSA texts do, at 50,416 and 24,224 word tokens, respectively, although both of them are used at the same

educational level and in the same kind of school (State school). This shows that the students who study FHFSA are potentially exposed to more vocabulary tokens (assuming all the texts are in fact gone through in the time available) than those who study EFSA during their reading lessons. However, the amount of word tokens in the texts of *Top Notch* at the preparatory level is quite similar to that in EFSA at 24,071. Regarding the FYU corpus, as we explained earlier in the methodology chapter (section 3.6.3 and section 3.9.3.3), the total words in RTs taught in the English & translation department is 34,272. The required reading of textbooks that FYU medicine and engineering students encounter contains far higher numbers of tokens but was limited to around 34,272 by the researcher simply to make the analysis manageable.

It is surprising to see that the RTs in the English series FHFSA, which is taught at secondary level (lower educational level), contain more than double the amount of the word tokens found in the RTs at the preparatory level, and considerably more than those in the first year English & translation department course, especially if we consider that the amount of teaching hours at the preparatory level (400 hours) is higher than the teaching hours over the three years secondary level (288 hours).

This straight away evidences the lack of a graded progression between levels, which one might expect to take the form of an increasing average number of words to read per class hour, and an increasing number of words per text. As Table 4.1 shows, the preparatory year is way below expectations both in words to read per hour and words per text. It is even lower than EFSA on both measures, as well as way below FHFSA, and average text length would need to be in the region of 500 rather than 126 to create a reasonable progression even to the demands of first year English, let alone medicine and engineering, where the reading demands (though we cannot easily measure them) must be considerably higher on both measures. This represents an initial signal to the university authorities that choose the preparatory year textbook that it may not be

entirely suitable, and an indication to the MoE that there are substantial differences between the two textbooks they have sanctioned for use at secondary level.

Turning now to the profiles of frequencies represented in the word tokens, Figure 4.1 shows the profiles of the word tokens as percentages in the six corpora.

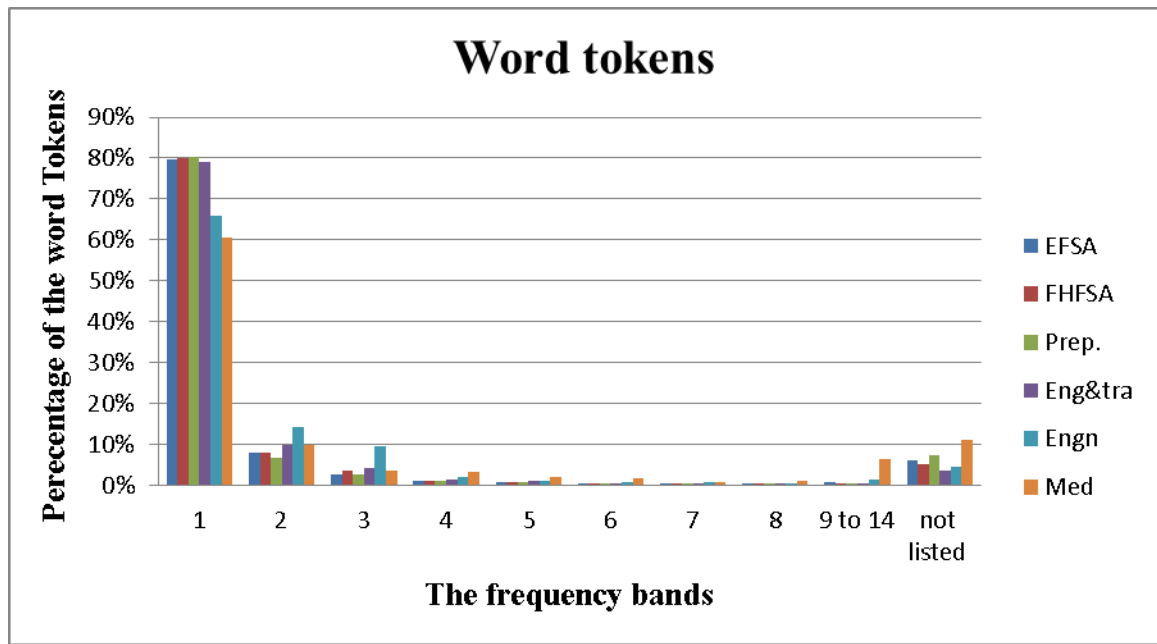


Figure 4.1: The BNC frequency profiles of word tokens in the six corpora

It can be seen that the majority of the word tokens in all the corpora lie in the first and the second frequency bands, which is not surprising, as it supports Nation's (2001) claim that the most 2000 frequent words cover around 80% of the running words in a text. Indeed, it is noticeable that not only in the secondary corpora but also in the preparatory and English first year ones, close to 80% of running words are within just the first thousand most frequent word families of English, showing that they are at quite an undemanding level. By contrast, engineering requires the second thousand to reach 80% while medical texts barely reach 70% with tokens belonging to the first two thousand families taken together. We now consider these results in more detail. Although the actual numbers of word tokens greatly differ between EFSA

and FHFSA, Figure 4.1 shows that the frequency profiles of tokens as percentages are very similar. Around 79% of the word tokens are found in the first band of BNC word family frequency lists, 8% of the word tokens lie in the second band of BNC word family frequency lists, and there is only a small amount of variation in the third band of BNC word family frequency lists at 2.75% for EFSA, and 3.7% for FHFSA. It is also clear that the RTs in both secondary English series contain only small proportions of word tokens belonging to the fourth band and above. This indicates that both English series at the secondary level focus most on the 2000 most frequent word families, although at this point it is not very clear whether those extra tokens in FHFSA are simply more repetitions of the same number of types occurring in EFSA (i.e. greater recycling), or if FHFSA includes more types as well as more repetitions of tokens. This will be elucidated later in this section when the word types and families are examined.

Looking next at the preparatory level in Figure 4.1, it appears that the distribution of word tokens of the RTs at this level against the BNC word family frequency lists is quite similar to the profile of the RTs at secondary level, and still little attention is paid to words above the second band. The results show that 20981 word tokens out of the 24071 word tokens lie in the first two bands of the BNC word family frequency lists, which make around 87%. Once again, then, the preparatory texts do not represent the graded progression one would expect in comparison with the secondary texts.

Finally, looking at the distribution of word tokens in the three corpora of the FYU level, great differences can be noted between these three corpora and also between each first year corpus and the corpora at the lower education levels especially for the Med and Engn corpora. The Med and Engn corpora contain markedly lower percentages of word tokens in the first frequency band than the Eng & tran corpus, at 50%, 66% and 79%, respectively. The percentages of the word tokens that lie in the second BNC frequency band are quite similar with a somewhat

higher percentage in the Engn corpus. However, the Engn and Med corpora contain slightly more word tokens in the third frequency band than the Eng and tran corpus does. Finally, the Med corpus includes somewhat more low frequency words and considerably more off-list items than the others.

This variation in the proportions of the word tokens in each band may result from the differences between the registers, as each first year corpus represents a different discipline. The vocabulary profile of the Eng & tran corpus is quite similar to the profiles of the corpora of lower educational levels, especially the FHFSA corpus. This may result from the fact that the first year English texts are not academic texts about English as a subject, but further texts for reading improvement with a similar purpose to those of the preparation year. Thus, all the RTs in the secondary level, preparatory level, and English & translation FYU level concern general topics (i.e. not specialised like engineering and medicine) and, linguistically, are all EGP or at most EGAP rather than true ESAP texts. The consistency of profile indicates that the FYU students studying English & translation meet less challenging reading than those who study engineering or medicine. The latter corpora are clearly distinct from the rest, being genuinely ESAP in nature. Nevertheless, they also differ from each other. The Engn corpus is notable for its comparatively greater presence of tokens from the second and third BNC frequency bands, possibly reflecting the fact that many technical terms of engineering are special uses of words that also occur in general English (e.g. *force*, *current*,). By contrast, the Med corpus has distinctively more low frequency and off-list words, perhaps reflecting that its terminology consists more of words that do not occur at all in general English (e.g. *infarction*, *resection*). This will be examined in more detail below.

Figure 4.2 shows the percentages of word types (See 2.6.1.1 for definition) in the RTs in the six corpora. Looking first at EFSA and FHFSA, which represent the RTs at the secondary level, we

see that the percentages of the word types in both English series are almost the same in the second frequency band, at 20%, but they differ systematically in the other bands. In the first frequency band the percentage of word types in the RTs in EFSA is higher than the percentage of the word types in the RTs in FHFSA, at about 45% and 33 %, respectively. In the third band, however, the percentage of word types in the RTs in FHFSA is higher than the percentage of the word types in RTs in EFSA at about 12.6% and 8%, respectively.

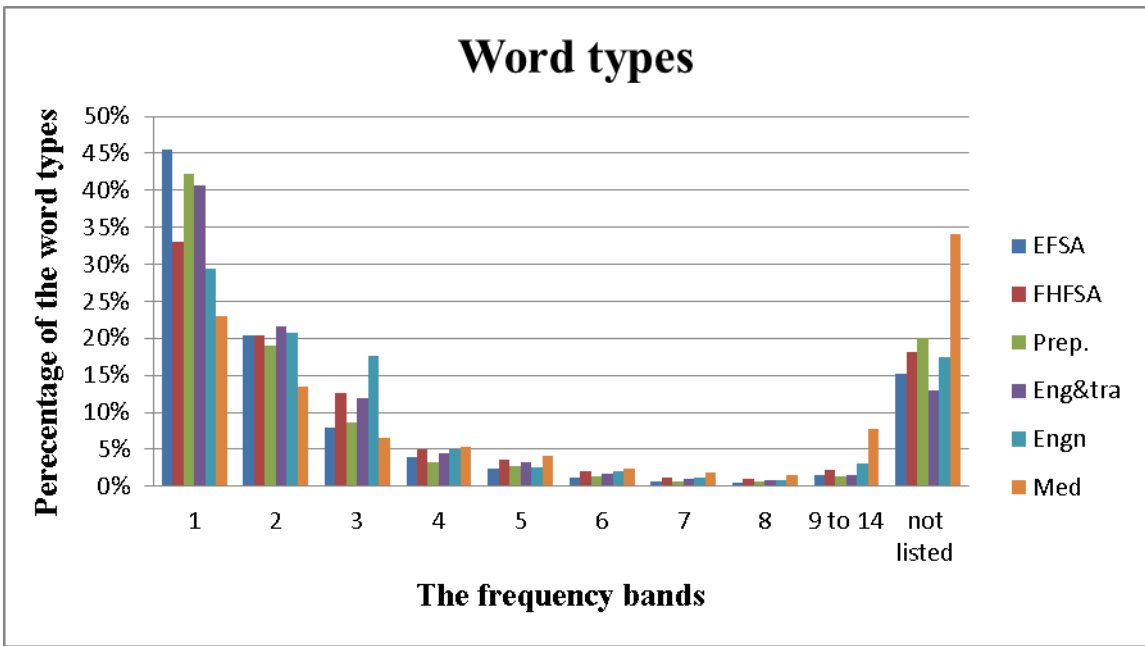


Figure 4.2: The BNC frequency profiles of word types in the six corpora

Moreover, the percentages of the word types in the RTs in FHFSA that occur in the fourth band and beyond are all slightly higher than the percentages of the word types in the RTs in EFSA. The centre of gravity of the distribution is further away from the first and second bands in FHFSA, which reflects more low frequency types being represented, despite the overall great similarity between the two corpora in percentages of tokens. Moreover, Table 4.2 shows clearly that in raw numbers, FHFSA is far better than the EFSA in exposing the students to more different word types at 5615 and 2943 word types, respectively, excluding the off-list. This all

gives another indication that FHFSA is more demanding than EFSA. We next need to consider the corresponding findings for the preparatory year corpus in order to ascertain which secondary textbook is a better preparation for the next level.

Table 4.2: Full description of the EFSA, FHFSA, and Prep vocabulary profiles

Corpus name	EFSA					FHFSA					Prep				
BNC Word family Frequency bands	Tokens		Types		Families	Tokens		Types		Families	Tokens		Types		Families
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.
First thousand	19328	79.79	1577	45.45	813	40247	79.83	2267	33.07	943	19341	80.36	1696	42.24	863
Second thousand	1926	7.95	710	20.46	474	4081	8.09	1404	20.48	729	1640	6.82	750	18.95	499
Third thousand	666	2.75	278	8.01	208	1867	3.70	868	12.66	567	635	2.64	341	8.62	270
Fourth thousand	277	1.14	138	3.98	115	547	1.08	344	5.02	293	241	1.00	130	3.28	115
Fifth thousand	190	0.78	85	2.45	73	362	0.72	242	3.53	206	195	0.81	108	2.73	91
Sixth thousand	114	0.47	43	1.24	35	204	0.40	139	2.03	120	84	0.35	29	1.36	25
Seventh thousand	36	0.15	26	0.75	25	106	0.21	83	1.21	76	34	0.14	26	0.66	24
Eighth thousand	48	0.2	17	0.49	15	103	0.20	71	1.04	67	112	0.15	27	0.68	26
Ninth to fourteen thousand	158	0.65	69	1.6	60	262	0.51	197	2.27	184	25	0.45	57	1.44	54
Not in the lists	1481	6.12	527	15.19	?	2637	5.23	1240	18.09	?	1764	7.26	793	20	?
Total	24224	-	3470	-	1818	50416	-	6855	-	3185	24071		3958		1991

Table 4.3: Full description of the Med, Engn, and Eng & tra vocabulary profile

Corpus name	First year Medicine (Med)					First year Engineering (Engn)					First year English & Translation (Eng & tra)				
BNC Word family Frequency bands	Tokens		Types		Families	Tokens		Types		Families	Tokens		Types		Families
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.
First thousand	20716	60.44	1219	22.91	619	22600	65.78	1135	29.47	593	27078	79.01	1894	40.73	892
Second thousand	3367	9.82	717	13.48	401	4889	14.23	799	20.74	388	3322	9.69	1003	21.57	608
Third thousand	1214	3.54	349	6.56	235	3294	9.59	676	17.55	400	1481	4.32	553	11.89	390
Fourth thousand	1118	3.26	283	5.32	183	679	1.98	194	5.04	147	432	1.26	206	4.43	173
Fifth thousand	684	2	221	4.15	139	355	1.03	98	2.54	75	320	0.93	154	3.31	124
Sixth thousand	601	1.75	130	2.44	97	241	0.7	81	2.1	59	150	0.44	82	1.76	69
Seventh thousand	307	0.9	99	1.86	72	228	0.66	49	1.27	40	67	0.20	46	0.99	43
Eighth thousand	369	1.09	78	1.47	63	116	0.34	31	0.80	27	80	0.23	43	0.92	38
Ninth - to fourteen thousand	2131	6.23	410	7.7	336	337	0.97	117	3.04	107	107	0.31	69	1.48	65
Not in the lists	3768	10.99	1814	34.10	??	1619	4.7	672	17.45	??	1235	3.6	600	12.9	??
Total	34275	-	5320	-	2145	34355	-	3852	-	1827	34272	-	4650		2402

Going back to Figure 4.2, we can see that the profile of percentages of word types in the RTs at the preparatory level is quite similar to that of the EFSA corpus, especially when we look at bands 1,3,4,5, and 6. Only the off-list words depart from that. This similarity is also clearly shown in the raw numbers of word types in each band in each corpus in Table 4.2. It is unexpected to see that the word types profile of the preparatory level is dominated by lower frequency bands than the profile of FHFSA, which is taught at a lower educational level. In other words, the RTs in FHFSA seem to contain more low frequency words (in the sense of types) than the RTs at the preparatory level. This may reflect that the RTs in FHFSA are more difficult than the other RTs at secondary and preparatory levels in terms of vocabulary, as they require more low frequency vocabulary knowledge than the RTs in EFSA and preparatory level (discounting the off-list, discussed below). From this we could say that, in a sense, EFSA is the better preparation than FHFSA for the preparatory reading since it is not at a higher level of lexical difficulty in terms of frequency of types, but, in fact, at a slightly lower level overall. However, a better conclusion may rather be that, as we showed in our interpretation of Table 4.1, the fault lies rather with the preparatory texts being too undemanding rather than FHFSA texts being too demanding. To establish this, we need to look at the profiles for the first year corpora. Furthermore, we should recall that the entire account in this section of how well texts at one level prepare students for texts at the next is based on preparedness as seen in similarity of frequency profile. We cannot say definitively whether students would encounter difficulties when they meet the RTs in the preparatory level until we compare the amount of specific words that are shared between each secondary corpus and the preparatory corpus, which will be presented in Section 4.2.4.2.

Regarding the FYU corpora, it can be noted in Figure 4.2 that the Eng & tran corpus contains the highest percentage of word types that occur in the first and second frequency bands at about 61% compared with the Med and Engn corpora on 36.39% and 50.21%, respectively. This suggests, as we saw earlier, that the FYU level students in the English and Translation Department may find their RTs less challenging compared with students in the Engineering and Medicine College. Furthermore, the percentage frequency profile for types in the first year English texts is generally closer to the profiles of the secondary and preparatory texts than it is to the profiles for engineering or medicine texts. The first year English profile is most similar to that of the preparatory texts at the lowest frequency band, but a little higher, and more like the FHFSA profile, at the second and later bands. This might be taken to suggest that the preparatory texts are a good preparation for the first year English texts, being slightly below their level in types profile. And, again, it could suggest that FHFSA is inappropriate at school level, as its texts show a frequency profile of types as demanding as that of first year English texts, if not more so. However, once again, we could take the alternative view that the fault lies with the first year English texts being insufficiently demanding, and hence FHFSA is a more realistic preparation and the preparatory year texts are far too undemanding. This will be further examined later in 4.2.4.

Somewhat similar to the pattern for tokens (Figure. 4.1), the engineering and medicine corpora contain lower percentages of word types from the first thousand frequency band than any other corpora (Figure 4.2 and Table 4.3). Engineering texts then stand out at the third frequency band (engineering 17.55% and medicine 6.56%), after which medicine has the highest percentages in all bands, especially the lowest frequency bands and the off-list. The explanation may be similar to that which we offered for the tokens result and again shows medicine texts to be the more

demanding of these two disciplines. In terms of preparation, clearly the preparatory year text profile is a long distance below the demands of the texts of both these disciplines, even if we discount the off-list items, so not suitable. The profile of FHFSA texts, paradoxically since it is a secondary school corpus, is just a little easier in type frequency terms than that of the engineering texts, so arguably a better preparation for the texts of that discipline. However, none of our corpora have texts with a profile that would really provide a reasonable stepping stone to the medicine first year texts.

At this point we need to consider the off-list figures in more detail, since these do not always conform to the widespread assumption, which we follow in this account, that by and large a less frequent word is more difficult or less likely to be known. From Tables 4.2 and 4.3 it appears, for example, that 7.26% and 10.99% of the running words in the preparatory corpus and Med corpus, respectively, lie in the off-list, whereas only 3.58%, and 4.46% of the running words in the Eng & tran corpus and Engn corpus, respectively, are found in the off-list. However, we could not say that the RTs at the preparatory level for this reason are more difficult than the RTs in the Engn and Eng & tran corpus or quite similar to the Med corpus before doing a manual investigation of the nature of the words in this list. In fact, we find that the off-list words may include difficult low frequency words and technical words, which represent high difficulty, but also may contain proper nouns, which may or may not be familiar to the students, but often do not entail high difficulty. If a Saudi reader encounters a proper name when reading in English, it may be familiar even though rare (e.g. *Makkah*), or else the capital letter alerts them to the fact that it is a proper name (e.g. *Cambridge*, *Lucy* in Table 4.4). They can then probably easily determine from context if it is a person or a place, after which it presents little reading difficulty. After investigating the word types in the off-list in all the corpora, it was noted that most of

these words, if not all, in the off-list in EFSA, FHFSA, preparatory, and English and translation corpora are proper nouns (which may be due to the high incidence of stories and dialogs), and abbreviations/acronyms (examples shown in Table 4.4). These words can be easily recognised and understood by the students. Thus, these words are not considered as a source of difficulty, despite their low frequency in English. However, in the Med and Engn corpora, most of the words in the off-list are specialist terms that relate to the specific discipline, low frequency word abbreviations of common terms used in a specific discipline, and words that are combined with one (or more than one) hyphen or slash (see examples in Table 4.4). Thus, it could be said that the majority of the words in the off-list category that appear in the Med and Engn corpora are most likely to be unfamiliar words for the students, in the sense that they are not already known from texts previously read (since they were not ESAP texts, but EGP, or at best EGAP), or from general world knowledge like proper names, which will clearly make the first year texts more difficult. Alternatively, we might take the view that these students will have been familiarised with the technical terms to be found in their first year texts not through any texts read before (which were not ESAP texts) but rather through the subject teaching they receive concurrently in the first year, prior to reading those texts, and hence these terms will be known. Indeed, in some few disciplines in some universities in the KSA, including the NBU for medicine but not engineering (see 1.5.2), subject teachers deliver first year 'terminology courses' specifically focused on familiarising students with the relevant English technical words. In this view, then, the off-list words in medicine could, in fact, be assumed to be known while engineering terms might not be known.

Table 4.4: Examples of off-list words by corpus

The corpus	Examples
EFSA	Makkah, Thoub (traditional dress in Saudi Arabia), name of cities in Saudi Arabia, names of people, common abbreviations (e.g. A.M.)
FHFSA	Name of cities in Saudi Arabia, names of people, common abbreviations (e.g. A.M.), Kabsah (traditional dish in Saudi Arabia)
Prep	Williams, Africa, Aberdeen , Adam, Alix, Allen, Asia, Australia, Brazil, CD, a.m., p.m.
Eng & tra	America, Arab, Britain, Cambridge, Egypt, Italy, Lucy, CO ₂ , DVD
Engn	Abbreviations such as C ₂ H, ACCU; specialist terms such as, capillarity, non-Newtonian fluid, transmissibility, hypereutectic, thermosetting, intermetallic; and two words combined with a hyphen such as Molybdenum-Rhodium.
Med	Proper nouns; Abbreviation such as Ca ²⁺ ; technical terms such as heterolysosomes, anamnesis; compounded words such as up-regulation; multi-word expressions combined with one or more than one hyphen or slash such as epithelial-mesenchymal, diet-induced-obesity, and double-mutant.

It is not surprising that we found that the number of off-list words in the Med corpus is higher than that in the Engn corpus, since, as we explained earlier, in engineering texts many basic technical words are also used in everyday English but in a partly or completely different meaning (e.g. *field*, *pole*, *wear*). In other words, the difference in the percentages of the off-list words in the Engn corpus and Med corpus may not reflect a real difference in the incidence of technical vocabulary but be more related to the different nature of the medicine register, which includes much terminology that does not occur in everyday English (see Table 4.4), unlike the engineering register.

These findings indicate that students who study engineering and medicine would encounter a huge number of words that are closely related to their disciplines, and these may be unfamiliar. In this respect the reading materials at the preparatory level (and even in FHFSA) may not be sufficient to provide the students with the vocabulary knowledge that they may need to deal with their first year reading. This finding supports those researchers who advocate the need for preparatory ESP courses which expose students to the language that is closely related to the students' disciplines so as to prepare them effectively for their university study (see 2.3), i.e. genuinely ESAP rather than EGAP, and certainly not just EGP courses. However, note that we did present above the alternative view that preparation for disciplines like engineering and medicine could rely on EGAP texts, if there is sufficient support through direct teaching of English specialist terminology later by subject teachers in the first year (Alghamdi, 2013).

Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of the word families in the six corpora. The percentages here represent the numbers of families represented by occurrence of at least one member, as a percentage out of the 1000 BNC families in each frequency band. For example, if we say that x corpus contains 80% of the word families in the first band that means the number of word families from the first band that are represented in this corpus is 800 word families. It is important to mention that the occurrence of one word family does not mean that all the word types of this word family appear in the corpus but it means at least one of these word types appears in the corpus (see 2.6.1.1). We should also note that these figures are sensitive to corpus size. The fact that the percentages from the FHFSA corpus stand out above all the rest may in part be due to the fact that this corpus was considerably larger than the others, so there was more opportunity for more families to be represented.

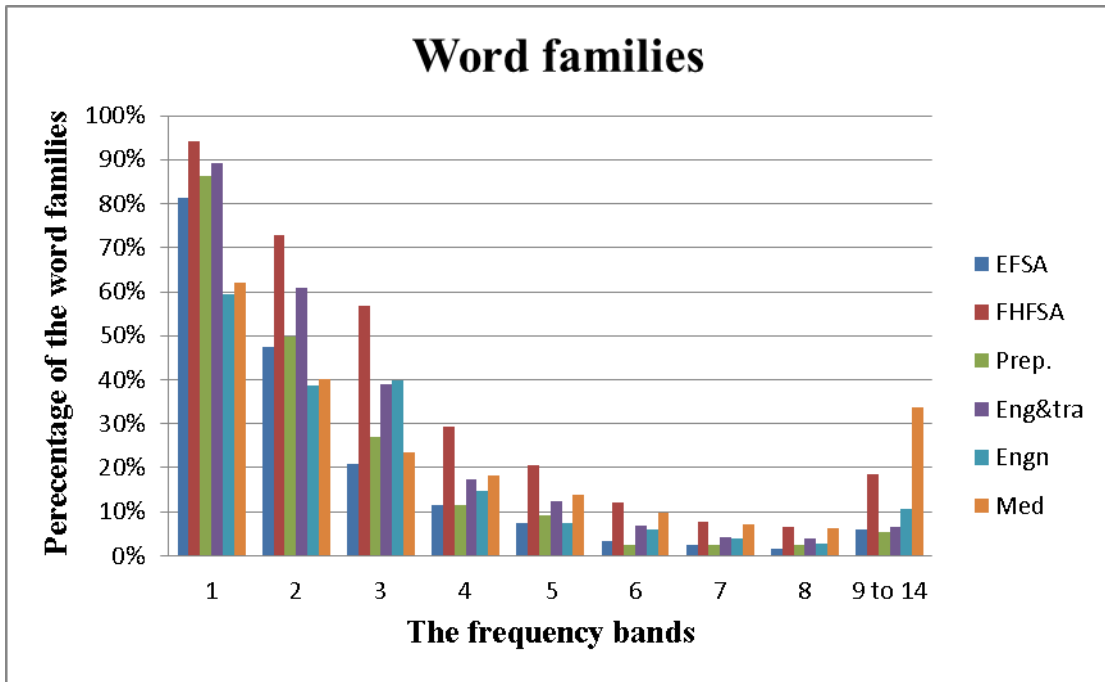


Figure 4.3: The BNC frequency profiles of the word families in the six corpora

With regards to the word families that occur in the RTs in each secondary English series, Figure 4.3 shows that the RTs in FHFSA actually come close to including at least one member of each of the first thousand BNC word families at 94.3%, nearly three quarters of the second thousand at 73%, more than half of the third thousand word families at 56%, and more than a quarter of the fourth thousand at 29.3%. This contrasts with the RTs in EFSA, which represent only 81% of the first thousand word families, less than half of the second thousand families at 47.4%, less than a quarter of the third thousand families, and only 11% of the fourth thousand word families. Moreover, the RTs in FHFSA contain representatives of almost three times as many word families as EFSA RTs in the fifth thousand families and on. All this arises presumably because the FHFSA contains far more tokens and RTs than the EFSA as we explained earlier in this section (see Table 4.1). These results, however, show once again and even more dramatically than those above that the RTs in FHFSA would be more challenging than the RTs in EFSA.

From Figure 4.3, it can also be noted that RTs at the preparatory level contain at least one word type of 86.3% of the word families in the first band of the BNC word family lists, and 49.9% of the word families in the second band in addition to only small percentages of the low frequency families. These percentages in the first band are almost half way between the EFSA and FHFSA percentages, but fall off in the less frequent bands to a level more or less similar to that of EFSA. This once again evidences that the preparatory level texts are not, in vocabulary frequency profile terms, clearly more demanding than the secondary level texts, as one would expect in a graded progression. Of the two secondary texts, clearly EFSA is a better preparation for the preparatory level, however, as it is at a difficulty level in word family frequency terms slightly below that of the preparatory level. On the other hand, since the RTs in FHFSA contain more word families than the RTs at the preparatory level in most of the bands, this may support our proposal that it would make for a better vocabulary progression if FHFSA was taught instead the current English series *Top Notch* at the preparatory level.

In addition, by comparing our results of the number of the word families in each GE series (EFSA, FHFSA, and Top Notch) with the English series used in other EFL contexts, for example, O'Loughlin (2012), who found that the New English File English series, provides only exposure to around 1500 word families (mostly in the first two bands), it can be noted that this result is closer to EFSA and Top Notch English series and far away from FHFSA, which may indicate again that FHFSA might be too demanding for the students at the secondary level.

Regarding the corpora of the first year at university, Figure 4.3 shows that the percentages of the word families vary considerably in each band. The word families profile of the Eng & tran corpus is closest to the word families profiles of the corpora at the lower education levels (secondary and preparatory levels), doubtless for reasons already described, such as that the

texts are not really academic subject texts containing specialised terms. The Eng & tran corpus word family percentages generally fall between the EFSA and FHFSA ones, and are higher than those of the preparatory level texts. In the highest three frequency bands they are closer to the FHFSA figures but, in lower bands, progressively drop back closer to the EFSA and preparatory level figures. This suggests that the FYU students in the English & translation department may not encounter difficulty as much as the students in other disciplines, if we assume that they read all the RTs at the previous levels and learned most of the vocabulary that they encountered there. In addition, since the RTs at FYU level in the English & translation department are taught for the same purpose as those at the secondary and preparatory levels, for improving the students reading ability (see 1.5.2), this may give us two indications. First, these RTs will be less challenging for the students who join this department after studying FHFSA. Second, the FHFSA is really too challenging for the secondary students relative to the demands of first year English texts. Indeed, it is noticeable in Figure 4.3 that in most bands the bars representing EFSA, preparatory year and first year English texts progressively rise in that order, suggesting that they represent a reasonable progression, while the FHFSA bar stands out way above them. However, as we have suggested earlier, we might alternatively take the view that the first year English texts are far too undemanding for their level (see 4.2.2), and harder texts should be read there, for which FHFSA might in fact be an appropriate preparation.

Regarding the Med and Engn corpora, it is not surprising that these corpora cover fewer word families from the two most frequent word families bands comparing with other corpora, since the literature often suggests that reading in an academic context requires vocabulary knowledge further than the first 2000 most frequent word families (e.g. Nation, 2006; Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010). These two corpora are, however, distinguished from each other in similar

ways to those we saw above. The Engn corpus, again, has a marked high point in its profile in the third frequency band and to some extent in the 9-14 bands, while the Med corpus, again, has a very highly prominent peak in the lowest frequency bands (9-14).

From the above, it appears that medicine texts and, to a lesser extent, engineering texts particularly require adequate vocabulary knowledge of low frequency words, and, of course, they also require adequate knowledge of their specialised terminology. Clearly, the reading at the preparatory level, due to its undemanding nature, reflected in its profile characterised by far more high frequency families and fewer low frequency ones than in medicine or engineering texts, is unlikely to be helpful in preparing the students for the FYU reading in these disciplines, especially if we take into consideration the specialised terminology required for reading comprehension in these two disciplines. On the other hand, the FHFSA texts come out with percentages in all bands, except 9-14, that are higher than those in the engineering and medicine texts. This may be in part due to the greater size of the FHFSA corpus; however, we must recall that while all texts in FHFSA were analysed, the texts in the Med and Engn corpora do not constitute all the reading that students may encounter in the first year, but they represent a small sample which is equal in size of the Eng & tran corpus. Hence, if the word family frequency profiles of the full bodies of reading that first year engineering and medicine students have to cope with were available, the family percentages for many bands might far exceed the percentages for FHFSA. In other words, we cannot definitely claim that FHFSA would be an adequate preparation for first year reading in these disciplines either.

In conclusion, we may say that all the comparisons made above between corpora in terms of number and frequency band profiles of word tokens, types and families show a similar picture. There is no satisfactory graded progression over successive levels. Rather, preparatory RTs are

no more demanding than EFSA secondary school texts and considerably less demanding than FHFSAs texts; furthermore they are way below the demands of first year medicine and engineering texts, so do not constitute a satisfactory preparation for them. With respect to first year English texts, earlier levels provide a better preparation, but this may be due to the first year texts being unsuitably low in demand (lower than secondary level FHFSAs texts).

4.2.2 Does the amount of vocabulary in each corpus fit the BNC frequency band figures one might expect at that level given the amount needed to prepare readers to, at some point, read authentic general academic English texts with understanding?

We next make use of frequency information from our analyses of texts at different levels to compare the corpora not just with each other but also with an established target/needed level of vocabulary known from previous research (see 2.6.1.3) to be required for comprehension of general academic English texts. The scenario we are considering leads, at least for medicine and engineering, to a situation where students in the first year have to read not general academic texts but highly specialised ones (i.e. ESAP rather than EGAP texts). Nevertheless, it is informative to see how far the other corpora from different levels contain texts which would help students at least reach this lower threshold requirement of ability to read and understand non-specialist academic English texts.

The knowledge of the first most frequent 5000 word families of the BNC is needed to achieve 95% coverage of tokens in an academic RT and hence minimum reading comprehension (95%). For optimal reading comprehension (98%), knowledge of 8000 word families is required (see 2.6.1.3). In this section, the vocabulary of the RT input of the EFSA, FHFSAs, Prep and Eng & tran corpora will, therefore, be assessed against these figures in order to see how many word

families are covered from the 5000 and 8000 word families in each corpus. This should give us insights into the adequacy of the RTs that are used for preparing students to meet the target of reading academic texts.

Table 4.5: The numbers of word families and types in the first five and eight word family frequency bands of the BNC

The corpus	Number of word families and types in the first 5000 word families		Number of word families and types in the first 8000 word families	
	Families	Types	Families	Types
EFSA	1683	2788	1758	2874
FHFSA	2738	5128	3001	5418
Prep.	1838	3025	1913	3107
Eng. & tra.	2187	3810	2337	3981

Table 4.5 shows that none of the RTs in the four corpora cover the minimum threshold of 5000 word families for understanding authentic general academic texts, though FHFSA comes closest. FHFSA contains 54% of what is required and EFSA only 33%. Even if we assume that exposure to at least one member of a word family will lead students to know all the other members, this still means that the RTs in FHFSA textbooks need to include almost double the amount of word families they contain in order to allow the students to be exposed even to at least one member of the 5,000 word families, while the RTs in EFSA need to include about three times the amount of word families that they have. Furthermore, exposure to this amount of vocabulary in RTs of course does not necessarily mean that the students will learn them as they usually do not learn every word they are exposed to.

We may also look at the requirement in terms of word types. According to Nation (2006), the number of word types in the first 5000 thousand most frequent word families is 24433 word

types (see 2.6.1.2.1). From Table 4.5, we can then see that the RTs in EFSA cover only 2788 word types which make up around 11% of all the word types in the 5000 most frequent word families. FHFSA covers more, but still only 5128 word types which make up at around 21% of all the word types in the most frequent 5000 word families.

As a side point we may notice that the rate of types per family within the first 5000 word families is not the same in the texts of the two secondary textbook. For EFSA it is 1.61 while for FHFSA it is 1.76. Thus FHFSA not only supplies more families and types than EFSA but also evidences slightly more types per family, thus possibly better assisting the acquisition of that family. However, the fact still remains that even FHFSA does not get close to exposing readers to the minimum 5000 families.

In the KSA, however, it might be argued that one should not expect that secondary level reading would on its own provide input to potentially enable students to attain knowledge of the full 5000, let alone 8000, families. Since the KSA has a preparatory year between school and university, it might be expected that exposure in that year would bridge the gap. We may then use the figures above to estimate the size of that gap. In fact, in order to reach the minimum threshold for reading comprehension of general academic texts, assuming all the secondary vocabulary had been learnt, and discounting any vocabulary learnt before the secondary stage (since we cannot estimate it), students who had studied EFSA would need to be exposed to and learn 8.3 word families (or 54.1 new word types) per hour during the preparatory level. By contrast, future students who will come to the preparatory year after studying FHFSA (the series which has recently been introduced into the secondary level; see 1.4.2 for more details) would need to be exposed to and learn 5.7 word families or 48.3 word types per hour. Both these estimates are quite high for what might be achievable, suggesting that not only more families

need to get exposure in the school textbooks but also more time might need to be allocated to English in the school curriculum to allow for more of the 5000 (or 8000) word families to have a chance to be learnt before students arrive at the preparatory year (see 2.6.1.4, where a maximum rate of vocabulary learning of 4.7 word types per hour was found).

However, unfortunately, the results also show (see Table 4.5) that the RTs at the preparatory level come nowhere near including the numbers of families and types needed to fill the gap. They contain only 1828 word families (3025 word types) out of the first 5000 BNC word families (24433 word types). In addition, most of these words occur in the first two bands as was shown in the previous section. Thus, it is more than likely that many word families and types are shared between each secondary corpus and the preparatory corpus (see further 4.2.4.2). With regard to the threshold vocabulary level for optimal reading comprehension (8000 word families), 1913 word families are represented, which accounts for only 23.9%. This percentage is far lower than our expectation as we know from the literature (see 2.6.1.3) that university students need to learn from 5000 to 8000 word families in order to comprehend even general academic texts (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010). Given this, it is highly expected that the students, especially those studying medicine and engineering, would face difficulty in understanding their university subject textbooks. The reason for this shortfall in the inclusion of all the necessary word types and word families at the preparatory level might be the lack of awareness by the writers of the selected textbook of the need to represent so many word families in input. It might also be due to insufficient allocated time for teaching English at the preparatory level, as suggested above, even more notably at secondary school level.

Finally, we also investigated the Eng & tran corpus in the same way as above. Recall that the first year texts read by majors in English and translation are not so much academic subject texts

but rather further general RTs used for a similar purpose to the RTs at the lower educational levels to improve the students' reading ability. Thus, English majors in effect have an additional year of preparation. Hence, an analysis of the first year Eng and tran texts allows us to discover if English majors have been exposed to at least the minimum necessary 5000 word families by their second year, when they begin to read academic subject texts in applied linguistics and the like.

Table 4.5 also shows that even the RTs in the Eng & tran corpus do not contain all the word families in the five bands. In fact, they only represent 2187 word families out of the 5000 word families, and 2337 out of the 8000 word families. One might of course argue that by the start of their second year the 5000 target is reached for English and translation majors if we simply add together the total families met by them at school in EFSA, in the preparation year, and in the first year (yielding a total of 5708 families). However, as we noted earlier, that is a false calculation since many of the families in the high frequency bands at each level will undoubtedly be the same. In section 4.2.4, we will provide figures which take this overlap into account. Consequently, we can argue that it is unlikely that first year students in the English and translation department will achieve the size of vocabulary that is required even for minimum comprehension (i.e. yielding 95% coverage of running words of text) despite completing the extra preparation in the first year in the English and translation department. This is further supported by the fact that, as was shown in the previous section 4.2.1, the majority of the word families lie in the first two bands of the BNC frequency word family lists.

We do, however, find some reasonable graded progression in the direction of 5000 over the three levels that the English majors in our study would pass through: EFSA texts contain 1683 word families, the preparatory level texts 1838 word families, and the Eng & tran corpus 2187

word families. By contrast, FHFSA does not fit such a graded sequence as it contains more word families even from low frequency bands than the Eng and tran corpus (2738). This is not in line with many researchers (Schmitt, 2000; Milton, 2009; Nation, 2001) who argue that exposing the students to the most frequent words is better than the low frequency words as it is believed that the possibility of learning the most frequent words is higher than that of learning the low frequency words. Hence, arguably, FHFSA, despite being a series of secondary school textbooks, might be better taught with English and translation students than the materials that they are currently exposed to.

Overall, then, the findings of this section are that, despite some progression observable over successive levels, neither texts at school level nor in the preparation year, nor even in the first year in the English and translation department, succeed in exposing students to enough word families for them to achieve (assuming 100% learning of what they are exposed to) even the minimum requirement for general academic reading of the 5000 most frequent families. See Appendix J which includes an example from each corpus.

4.2.3 For each corpus at each level, how many BNC frequency bands of words does a reader need to know (in part at least) in order to achieve 95% or 98% coverage of tokens in the corpus and efficient reading comprehension of texts of that corpus? Is the amount reasonable, given the texts that students read at prior levels and the amount of time available for learning?

In this section, we again use BNC frequency band figures, but this time to assess the data without looking forward to a needed target number of word families (as in 4.2.2) but rather looking backward and considering how realistic the texts at a particular level are in terms of

how much vocabulary a reader needs to know already in order to understand them. As we saw in Chapter two (Section 3.6.1.3), even for intensive reading with classroom or dictionary support, it is recommended that only 5% of running words in texts are unfamiliar. Hence, we can assess the RTs in our corpora at a given level by seeing how much word knowledge is needed to ensure that the other 95% of tokens is in fact already known, and whether, from our knowledge of the texts they read at previous levels, this is theoretically achievable.

Tables 4.6 and 4.7 display the cumulative percentages of word tokens across decreasing BNC frequency bands in the RTs of the six corpora at the three successive educational levels. Hence, they show the vocabulary size in terms of word family frequency bands that is necessary for reasonable comprehension (95%), and optimal comprehension (98%) (see 2.6.1.3). To avoid an overestimation of the vocabulary necessary for comprehension, we (for reasons described in 4.2.1) presume that students know the words in the off-list in EFSA, FHFSA, the preparatory texts and the first year Eng and tran texts without much difficulty, and that not knowing them may not interfere with comprehension. Therefore, the off-list percentages of tokens were counted first in estimating how many frequency bands of families need to be known in order to achieve 95% and 98% coverage for reasonable and optimal comprehension. With respect to the off-list items in the medicine and engineering corpora, recall that in 4.2.1, they would be included in the calculation first, just as we did for off-list items in all the other corpora. However, we cannot assume that off-list items are already known largely from general world knowledge, in the way proper names of people and places could be, since they are highly technical terms.

Table 4.6: Cumulative percentage coverage of tokens in the EFSA, FHFSA and Prep corpora by the fourteen 1,000 word-families from the BNC, including the off-list

Corpus name	EFSA			FHFSA			Prep		
BNC Word family Frequency bands	Token	Type	Family	Token	Type	Family	Token	Type	Family
	Cum. % coverage	No.	No.	Cum. % coverage	No.	No.	Cum. % coverage	No.	No.
Off- lists	6.12	527	?	5.23	1240	?	7.26	793	?
1 st thousand	85.91	1577	813	85.06	2267	943	87.62	1696	863
2 nd thousand	93.86	710	474	93.15	1404	729	94.44	750	499
3 rd thousand	96.61	278	208	96.85	868	567	97.08	341	270
4 th thousand	97.75	138	115	97.93	344	293	98.08	130	115
5 th thousand	98.53	85	73	98.65	242	206	98.89	108	91
6 th thousand	99	43	35	99.05	139	120	99.24	29	25
7 th thousand	99.15	26	25	99.26	83	76	99.38	26	24
8 th thousand	99.35	17	15	99.46	71	67	99.53	27	26
9 th to 15 th thousands	100	69	60	99.96	197	184	99.98	57	54
Total		3470	1818		6855	3185		3958	1991

From Table 4.6, it appears that for minimally adequate comprehension of the RTs in the EFSA series, what is required is knowledge of the off-list words plus the first three most frequent BNC bands (2565 word types in total, not including off-list words), to reach 96.61% coverage. However, to achieve optimal reading comprehension (98% coverage) of these RTs requires additional knowledge of some words from the fourth and the fifth bands.

Interestingly, for the RTs in FHFSA, the percentages of vocabulary from different bands required in order to achieve the two different degrees of comprehension are almost identical to those for EFSA. The main difference is just that, due to the larger amount of reading material in FHFSA that we have already noted, the percentages correspond to considerably more word families and types that need to be known within each band than in EFSA. The students, for example, need to know 4539 word types (excluding the off-list) to reach 95% coverage, almost twice as many as they need to know to attain the same degree of comprehension of EFSA.

According to Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010), the 95% coverage is the better target for reading such as ours, associated with instructional purposes. Given this, it appears that although the RTs in FHFSA require knowledge of vocabulary in exactly the same frequency bands as those in EFSA do, they require more of it. Hence, as already shown in 4.2.1, FHFSA is likely to be more challenging for the students than EFSA. However, the fact that FHFSA exposes the students to more vocabulary than EFSA may help them at the next educational levels (cf. 4.2.2).

A notable point is that both secondary level corpora require knowledge of only the first three BNC word family frequency bands in order to attain text coverage of 95%. This is of course different from the five bands (i.e. 5000 families) which Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010) talk about as necessary for achieving 95% coverage. The reason is that they are referring to what is needed to achieve that coverage of authentic texts and the texts in our textbooks do not qualify as authentic in their sense. These results are consistent with the results reported by Hsu (2009), DehGhaedi (2013), and Matsuoka and Hirsh (2010), who found that most of the required vocabulary knowledge to reach the 95% coverage is far below the threshold of 5000 word families.

The current study focused on three educational levels: secondary, preparatory, and FYU level; therefore, it is not clear whether the students would have been exposed to sufficient vocabulary input in school prior to the secondary level so as to be equipped with the amount of vocabulary needed for minimally adequate comprehension of either EFSA or FHFSA. Instead, an estimation can be made of whether it would be feasible for students to have been exposed to and learnt the numbers of word types required for 95% coverage of either EFSA or FHFSA before starting the secondary level.

With regard to the Saudi educational system (Chapter one, Section 1.4) English used to be taught from grade six for two classes per week at elementary level, and four classes per week at the intermediate level. However, from 2013, English has been introduced in the fourth and fifth elementary grades. Hence, over the whole period of school, before that recent change, Saudi students (including those who participated in this study) had studied English for 4 years (each year 32 weeks) which totals for 336 hours. By doing a calculation to ascertain how many English words Saudi learners would need to learn per hour so as to start the secondary level knowing the threshold number of words (covering 95% of the text), assuming they were actually exposed to the right words, we find that that they need to learn about 7.6 word types (4.08 word families) per hour for EFSA, and around 13.5 word types (6.6 word families) per hour for FHFSA (disregarding the words in the off-list). However, for the new students who started learning English from the fourth elementary grade, which means that they get 96 extra hours of teaching English, it will be 5.9 word types (3.89 word families) per hour for EFSA, and 10.5 types (6.33 word families) for FHFSA. It is important to mention that by this calculation the amount needed to be learnt prior to secondary level might be overestimated as the students will also learn some words during their study in the secondary level itself, which lasts for three years,

and we are not taking into account any words learnt from sources other than the textbook RTs. However, we are also being very optimistic, in the sense that we are envisaging an optimal learner who learns all words that he or she is exposed to, which may not really exist. Based on the estimation obtained from earlier studies (see 2.6.1.4), it could be argued that these rates per hour in both English series, especially FHFSA, are far higher than the higher estimation, which is 4.7 word types.

Table 4.6 also shows that before starting to read texts at the preparatory level, the students would need to know words just from the first 2000 BNC word families plus the off-list in order to reach 94.5%, which is very close to 95% coverage for reading with minimally acceptable understanding. This result is slightly below the results of the previous studies found in most of the GE textbooks (see 2.6.1.6). In terms of words, the students need to know 1362 word families corresponding to 2446 word types from the first two BNC bands (disregarding the off-list) in order to achieve close to 95% coverage and so minimally adequate comprehension. This is slightly less than the equivalent which is required for reading EFSA and only a little more than half what is needed for reading FHFSA. Doing the calculation to ascertain how many English words Saudi learners would need to learn per hour so as to start the preparatory level knowing the threshold number of words in the BNC frequency lists (covering 95% of the text), and assuming they are exposed only to the words needed for that, we find that that students who started their English instruction in grade 6 at elementary level need to learn almost 2.1 word families per hour, which corresponds to 3.91 word types in addition to understanding the words of the off-list. Those who started in the fourth grade need to learn only 1.8 word families or 3.3 word types per hour in addition to the off-list words. These rates seem to be feasible as they are

below the higher estimation (4.7 word types) of learning vocabulary per instructed hour (see 2.6.1.4).

It is notable that the English RTs in both English series at secondary school level actually require more vocabulary knowledge to reach coverage corresponding to minimum comprehension than the RTs at the preparatory level do. This is a further indication of what we have already seen; i.e. the preparation year texts do not represent a progression we would expect to something more challenging than the secondary level texts. Although at this point we do not know how many specific word families and types are actually shared between the RTs in each secondary English series and the RTs at preparatory level, which will be investigated later in Section 4.2.4, we could say that this finding gives us an indication that the RTs in both secondary level textbooks are quite likely to help to prepare the students to reach 95% coverage of tokens in the preparatory level texts.

It is important to re-emphasise that the above figures provide us only with a general picture of the vocabulary load that students need to learn per hour during their study prior to each later level, as the textbooks at a lower level (e.g. secondary) may not contain (and therefore the students do not have the opportunity to learn) the right specific word types from a given frequency band needed to attain the threshold 95% or 98% coverage at the next educational level. Hence, the actual number of specific word types students meet at one level, which also occur at another (i.e. are shared), also needs to be calculated. This can be done least for the secondary level and preparatory level in relation to later levels. This will, therefore, be done in 4.2.4. It is also important to realise that while there is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, even knowing all of the words of a text still does not

guarantee 100% comprehension, indicating that vocabulary knowledge is only one aspect of reading comprehension, albeit a significant one.

Turning now to the FYU level corpora, as we already saw in Table 4.2, and as reflected again in Table 4.7, the combined percentages of tokens accounted for by the first 2000 BNC word families provide coverage of 70.26% and 80% in the Med and Engn corpora, respectively (the off-list is not included). This remarkably low coverage shows that students with a vocabulary of only 2000 frequent word families may have great difficulty in reading medicine and engineering texts. Owing to a lack of familiarity with 30% of the words in a medical textbook, first year medicine majors would encounter on average one unknown word when reading every 3-4 words of the text. Even if we assume they know the entire off-list words (10.99%) as well, for the reasons discussed above, they would still meet one in every five words that is unknown. Engineering majors would be only in a slightly better position, meeting one in five words they do not know if they know the first 2000 families only, and one in seven words if we imagine them to know the off-list words (4.7%) as well. These are figures nowhere near the one unknown word in the 20 words target (=95% coverage). By contrast, in the Eng and tran corpus, knowing the first 2000 BNC word families alone would lead to around 88.7 % coverage and this increases to 92.3% on the assumption that most of the word types in the off-list are known (i.e. only slightly above one word in 20 is unknown). This clearly indicates that the first university year medicine and engineering students will encounter more difficulty than the English and translation students.

Table 4.7: Cumulative percentage coverage of tokens in the Med, Engn and Eng & tran corpora by the fourteen 1,000 word-families from the BNC, including the off-list

Corpus name	Med.			Engn.			Eng. & tra.		
BNC Word family	Token	Type	Family	Token	Type	Family	Token	Type	Family
Frequency bands	Cum. % coverage	No.	No.	Cum. % coverage	No.	No.	Cum. % coverage	No.	No.
Off- lists	10.99	1814	??	4.7	672	??	3.6	600	??
1 st thousand	71.43	1219	619	70.48	2267	943	82.61	1894	892
2 nd thousand	81.25	717	401	84.71	1404	729	92.3	1003	608
3 rd thousand	84.79	349	235	94.3	868	567	96.62	553	390
4 th thousand	88.05	283	183	96.28	344	293	97.88	206	173
5 th thousand	90.05	221	139	97.31	242	206	98.81	154	124
6 th thousand	91.8	130	97	98.01	139	120	99.25	82	69
7 th thousand	92.7	99	72	98.67	83	76	99.45	46	43
8 th thousand	93.79	78	63	99.01	71	67	99.68	43	38
9 th thousand	95.3	80	57	99.32	24	23	99.74	14	13
10 th thousand	96.31	64	57	99.52	22	20	99.81	18	17
11 th thousand	96.73	51	43	99.65	20	19	99.85	10	10
12 th thousand	98.07	82	57	99.84	15	13	99.9	14	14
13 th to 15 th thousands	100	133	110	99.98	25	23	99.99	13	11
Total		5320	2145		3852	1827		4650	2409

It appears then from Table 4.7 that the vocabulary level required to reach 95% coverage varies considerably from one discipline to another. For the Eng & tran corpus, the students need to know between the most frequent 2000 and 3000 BNC word families, in addition to the words in the off-list, which are mainly proper nouns, in order to reach the minimum 95% coverage for adequate reading comprehension. In terms of actual words, aside from the off-list, they need to

know 3450 word types (1890 word families) from the first three BNC frequency bands in order to reach 95% coverage. That is around half way between the equivalent figures for EFSA (2565 types) and FHFSA (4539 types) and considerably larger than the 2446 types required for the preparatory year texts. It seems therefore (even before we examine the precise overlaps in specific items in 4.2.4) that the students, after studying any English series at secondary level, plus the preparatory level texts, would at least have been exposed to the first year threshold numbers of types and families and so potentially have the vocabulary knowledge to ensure the required coverage (95%) of the first year texts that they read.

By contrast, the Med and Engn corpora require much more vocabulary knowledge even to reach 95% coverage, especially if we take into consideration that it may not make sense to include the off-list items as known by other means. For the Engn corpus, the cumulative coverage reaches 95% between the third 1000 and fourth 1000 most frequent BNC word families plus the knowledge of the off-list items, which are more likely to be unfamiliar. This result is consistent with the estimation that was proposed by Hsu (2014) for the vocabulary knowledge required for reaching 95% in engineering textbooks. This amount of vocabulary is clearly beyond that required for 95% coverage of the secondary level texts and even further beyond that required for 95% coverage of the preparatory year texts (only the first 2000 BNC families). Yet it is definitely still below the vocabulary size determined by many researchers as necessary for 95% coverage of authentic academic texts, which is 4000-5000 word families (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010). Possibly, this is due to the phenomenon that we have already mentioned of much engineering terminology using everyday words in specialised senses, these words being perhaps especially in the second and third 1000 bands (e.g. Figure 4.1). It may also be due to the

fact that we are not here analysing all the texts that first year Engn students have to read, but only a sample.

However, it appears from Table 4.7 that the Med corpus is the most lexically demanding of all, as it requires knowledge of vocabulary right down to some of the 9th 1000 BNC word families plus all the off-list items, which are more likely to be unfamiliar, in order to reach the minimum reading comprehension threshold (text coverage of 95%). This vocabulary demand is far higher in terms of the number of frequency bands than the standard vocabulary threshold of the 5000 most frequent word families for this purpose. Presumably, it is due to many medical technical terms not being special meanings of general words (as in engineering) but words which only occur relatively rarely with respect to English as a whole, i.e. in medical texts, so occur in lower BNC frequency bands, and the off-list.

From these results it seems that the RTs at the preparatory level cannot, as they should, be supplying medicine and engineering students with a substantial part of the vocabulary they need to know in order to achieve 95% coverage of their first year texts, particularly the former. The representation of word families in frequency bands 2 through 8 is after all far better in FHFSA than the preparatory year textbook (Figure 4.3), which leaves a considerable gap, especially between the word families of *Top Notch* and those of the medical texts. Furthermore, where smaller numbers of families are involved, as is the case in the less frequent bands, the likelihood of words being shared between two corpora, both of which have only a small number of words from the same band, is much reduced (as will be explored in 4.2.4). While the preparatory texts appear superficially to be a better preparation for the words needed to achieve 95% coverage in the engineering texts than in the medical ones, this is probably illusory given that many words in bands 2 onwards might well be used in rather different senses in the two corpora. We must also

remember that the account here is based only on a sample of first year texts and not on all the texts that engineering and medicine students have to read, so, in reality, considerably more word families may be needed than those we are considering in our corpora for these two disciplines. Thus, it would not be surprising if the first year students (especially of medicine and engineering) find themselves unready for reading their subject textbooks: student perceptions about how the RTs at the prior educational level have prepared them for the reading demands in their disciplines will be presented in the next chapter. The results in Table 4.7 (highlighted) show that students need even more vocabulary knowledge to reach the 98% coverage with which they could read their FYU textbooks independently with good understanding. This level of reading is, in fact, probably that which is more expected at least by the medicine and engineering colleges.

Although we cannot provide an accurate calculation for the expected number of words that students should have at the first year medicine and engineering students as we only have a sample from their textbooks, the results suggest that the FYU level engineering and medicine students are more likely to face huge difficulty in understanding the vocabulary in their subjects' textbooks, especially if we know that, at least in theory, that it is impossible to learn the amount of the word families (and their types) suggested to reach 95% and 98% before starting their FYU level (see 2.6.1.4).

Overall, the above account suggests that secondary level texts may provide enough vocabulary for students to have been exposed at least to the threshold vocabulary for minimally adequate comprehension of the preparatory level texts (95% coverage of running words); and secondary texts together with preparatory texts may do the same for first year English texts. On the other hand, it is uncertain if levels below the secondary one achieve this for secondary school texts, and even if they do, the required vocabulary learning burden would be rather high given the

hours of teaching available. With respect to medicine and engineering, it seems again that there must be a considerable gap between the frequency bands and the amount of vocabulary that texts at earlier levels expose learners to on the one hand and those needed to achieve even 95% coverage in a sample of first year texts on the other.

In the next section, however, we will provide a more precise answer to the questions of this section by investigating how many specific word tokens, families and types are shared between the lower educational level corpora and higher ones. This will provide a clearer picture than that based purely on frequency band evidence of the type used so far.

4.2.4 How much specific vocabulary is shared between different corpora? What does this tell us precisely about how well texts at one level ensure coverage of tokens in texts at the next, and so ensure adequate comprehension? Is the actual load of new word types and families to learn at each level a reasonable one?

Up to now we have been answering questions concerning graded vocabulary progression, text coverage and potential vocabulary learning load, using only information about numbers of words in different BNC frequency bands in different textbooks. In this section, we revisit similar issues utilising more precise information based on counts of numbers of specific word tokens, types and families shared between corpora. First, we consider again the coverage of higher level corpora by lower level corpora, this time in specific shared vocabulary items; then we consider the learning load involved in the specific vocabulary that occurs in texts at a given level but has not occurred in texts at earlier levels.

4.2.4.1 What percent of tokens in higher level corpora consist of words that already occurred in the lower level one(s)? Is 95% or 98% coverage achieved for efficient reading?

First, we will compare the preparatory corpus with each secondary corpus, to ascertain which secondary level corpus is better in preparing for the RTs at the preparatory level. Second, we will compare the preparatory corpus with each FYU corpus, in order to examine the suitability of the RTs at the preparatory level in preparing for each of the three first year disciplines. Finally, we will compare the combination of each secondary corpus and the preparatory corpus with each first year corpus, in order to see how the RTs at both lower educational levels together succeed in preparing students for reading textbooks in each FYU discipline.

Regarding the comparison between the preparatory corpus and each secondary level corpus (EFSA and FHFSA), Table 4.8 shows that, despite what the analysis in terms of frequency bands suggested (see 4.2.3), neither of the secondary corpora quite provides the students with sufficient precise vocabulary items to enable them to reach minimum reading comprehension (95% coverage) as suggested by Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, (2010) in the RTs at the next educational level, which is the preparatory level. However, FHFSA, as we would expect from the account above, is better than EFSA in exposing students to word tokens that they need in order to understand the reading at the preparatory level (covering 87.6% and 80.5% respectively).

As with the coverage figures in 4.2.3, we are of course detailing ideal or optimum coverage, which would only be achieved if students actually read all the RTs and learn all the vocabulary they meet.

From Table 4.8 it appears that the percentage of word tokens in preparatory year texts that are not covered by the EFSA corpus and only appear in the preparatory corpus is 14.2%, whereas the percentage of the word tokens that are not covered by the FHFSA is only 9.3%, but neither reaches the target 5%.

Table 4.8: The number and percentage of word tokens that are shared or occur only in the preparatory corpus but not in secondary level corpora

The Corpus	Preparatory (24071 tokens)			
	Number of shared tokens	% of shared tokens out of total tokens in Prep level	Only in Prep tokens	% of new word tokens in Prep level
EFSA	19378	80.5%	4693	19.5%
FHFSA	21080	87.6%	2991	12.4%

It is important to mention, however, that these figures must be seen as an underestimate of the coverage because some of the words that only appear in the preparatory level texts in this analysis may not be new words or unfamiliar words for some students for two reasons. First, the students have studied English for around 4 years prior to the secondary level (at elementary and intermediate levels), but in the current study we only compare the secondary level with the preparatory level. Thus, some words might have been met and potentially learned by the students during their study in previous years (the intermediate and the elementary level) but, by chance, did not occur in the secondary level texts, yet may reappear in preparatory year texts (see 1.4 for the educational levels in Saudi Arabia). In principle, this could be determined by analysing all the reading material at those lower levels, but we were not able to include that within the scope of the current study, and we do not have the vocabulary lists from texts in these textbooks of earlier levels so as to make the comparison. Second, the word tokens in the off-list are included in this comparison (rather than being assumed to be known, as in 4.2.3), although

they are, as we argued in 4.2.1, likely be familiar to most of the students even if they have not occurred in prior texts as they are mainly proper nouns. It proved technically difficult to exclude off-list words using the Text-Lex compare software that we relied on, but if we had been able to do the analysis reported in Table 4.8 on the corpora with off-list items omitted, we suspect that at least FHFSA coverage of the prep corpus might reach close to 95%.

Table 4.9 shows the comparison between the preparatory corpus and each FYU corpus in tokens. The results again show that the RTs at the preparatory level do not expose the students to the word tokens that they need in order to reach even the minimum reading comprehension threshold (coverage of 95%) in any of the three different disciplines, namely medicine, engineering and English and translation. The preparatory corpus provides only 60% and 69.3% coverage of the Med and Engn corpora, respectively, confirming what we surmised from the analysis in 4.2.3. Clearly, medicine and engineering students with a vocabulary of only the items that appeared at the preparatory level may have great difficulty in reading their FYU subjects' textbooks. Furthermore, the Med and Engn corpora include only samples of what students encounter but not all the reading materials that they may read in their first year at university level. Thus, we could expect that the coverage might be even worse if we had analysed complete first year corpora for these disciplines. On the other hand, if we could assume that many off-list words (and words in the lower frequency bands) which are terminology of the discipline (see discussion in 4.2.1) would in fact be known from other input rather than prior reading (e.g. first year terminology or other subject courses), then this picture might in fact not be quite as bad as it appears.

The coverage by the preparatory year texts is, however, much better in relation to the Eng & tran corpus (84.4%), as we anticipated in 4.2.3, because of the similarity between the RTs at the

preparatory level and the first year of the English and translation department; in both levels the students are receiving unspecialised RTs which cover general topics and are not academic subject textbooks (as we will see later in 4.6). It is worth mentioning again that this coverage might be increased if we could exclude the off-list from the Eng & tran corpus, which consists of words that may not be difficult for most of the students as they are mainly proper nouns, or abbreviations which could be understood easily, unlike the words in off-lists in the Med and Engn corpora, which include mainly specialised terminology or low frequency words.

Table 4.9: The number and percentage of word tokens that are shared or occur only in one FYU corpus but not in the preparatory level corpus (off-list is included for all corpus)

Corpora	No. of shared tokens in the First Year corpus	% of shared tokens out of total in the First Year corpus	Tokens in the first year only	% of new word tokens in the First Year
Prep coverage of Med	20577	60%	13698	40%
Prep coverage of Engn	23812	69.3%	10543	30.7%
Prep coverage of Eng & Tran	28913	84.4%	5359	15.6%

It is unfair to only compare the FYU corpora with the preparatory year corpus, as students also received English reading teaching at the secondary level and this should not be ignored for two main reasons. First, one of the English teaching objectives at the secondary level is to prepare the students for academic reading and the authentic reading that they will need to do at university level (see 1.4.1). Second, the preparatory year directly follows the secondary level and teaching English in this year in one way or another could be considered as a further

preparation for the student to cope with their FYU reading. Therefore, we next analysed all the RTs in each English series (either EFSA or FHFSA) combined with the RTs of the preparatory year, to ascertain their joint coverage of FYU texts.

Table 4.10 shows that students who study EFSA at the secondary level even after finishing the preparatory level, and assuming they learn all words they are exposed to, still could not get close to the 95% and 98% coverage thresholds if they go on to study engineering or medicine. However, the students in the English and translation department would be very close to 95% coverage, and probably pass that threshold if we additionally considered that they might know the word tokens in the off-list of RTs in that department regardless of those items having occurred before or not. In contrast, the FHFSA corpus plus the Prep corpus, as we might expect from the findings of 4.2.3, provide better coverage of each FYU corpus than the EFSA plus Prep corpora did. As is shown in Table 4.10, the RTs in the FHFSA and the preparatory level textbooks together provide 69.9%, 82.7%, and 92.5% coverage, respectively, of Med, Engn, and Eng & tran RTs. Students who go on to preparatory RTs after studying the RTs in FHFSA at secondary level are still far, however, from achieving the 95% and 98% coverage thresholds in engineering and the medicine first year textbooks. Still, they could achieve the minimum reading comprehension threshold (95% coverage) for the RTs in the first year of the English and translation department, and they may come very close to the optimal reading threshold (98% coverage) if we assume they know the off-list items even without prior exposure.

Table 4.10: The number and percentage of word tokens that are shared or occur only in one FYU corpus but not in combination of the preparatory level corpus with either of the secondary level corpora (off-list included)

The Corpus	The results based on the first year university corpus.			
	No. of shared tokens	% of shared tokens out of total in First Year corpus	Tokens in the First Year only	% of new word tokens in the First Year
(Prep + EFSA) coverage of Med	22207	64.8%	12068	35.2%
(Prep + EFSA) coverage of Engn	26038	75.8%	8317	24.2%
(Prep. + EFSA) coverage of Eng & Tran	30427	88.8%	3845	11.2%
(Prep + FHSA) coverage of Med	23963	69.9%	10312	30.1%
(Prep. + FHSA) coverage of Engn	28399	82.7%	5956	17.3%
(Prep + FHSA) coverage of Eng & Tran	31687	92.5%	2585	7.5%

Overall, then, the results in this section are a little more pessimistic than the corresponding ones in 4.2.3, which were based merely on comparing corpora at different levels in terms of numbers of words in frequency bands rather than the specific words actually occurring. However, the general conclusion remains similar. English and translation majors can, if they learn well at earlier levels, arrive at their first year equipped with enough words to understand their first year texts, especially if they experienced FHFSA at secondary level. Medicine and engineering students, on the other hand, will find reading at the FYU level too difficult for them, regardless

of which textbook they used at secondary level and regardless of how well they learnt all the words they met when reading at previous levels, unless we can assume they have other non-reading input such as a terminology course which would improve their coverage somewhat. This may well affect their general academic learning success (see 2.1.6). Therefore, the results may indicate that the problem is in the RTs that students are exposed to at the preparatory level, as they fail to minimise the gap between the secondary and the preparatory level efficiently. In addition, we could say that if the English and translation department was to require its students to read specialised academic texts closely related to their discipline in the first year, parallel with the other departments, they too might find a gap between them and the RTs that they have received at earlier education levels.

4.2.4.2 Is the amount of new vocabulary available in texts at each level appropriate amount in terms of vocabulary learning load?

In the previous subsection 4.2.4.1, we discussed the coverage by earlier texts of later texts in terms of shared tokens in order to find out how well the RTs at earlier levels provide the necessary vocabulary items that are needed for attaining reasonable reading comprehension. In this section, we will focus on the progression of the vocabulary learning load of expected unfamiliar words, in terms of word types and word families.

We start with the comparison between the RTs at secondary level and preparatory level. Table 4.11 shows the numbers of word types and families that only occur in the preparatory corpus compared with each secondary level corpus (EFSA and FHFSA), as well as shared items and ones that only occur in the secondary level corpus. The off-list is excluded here as it includes

proper nouns and abbreviations that we argue will be easily recognised by the students (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.11: The number of word families and types shared and not shared between each secondary corpus and the preparatory corpus (off-list excluded)

EFSA vs. Preparatory level						FHFSa vs. Preparatory level					
Shared between the two corpora		Unique to EFSA		Unique to Preparatory		Shared between the two corpora		Unique to FHFSa		Unique to Preparatory	
Families	Types	Families	Types	Families	Types	Families	Types	Families	Types	Families	Types
1091	1675	727	1268	900	1490	1437	2211	1748	3404	554	954

Table 4.11 shows that the students may encounter a great number of new word types and families, whether they have studied the RTs in EFSA or FHFSa (though we are of course disregarding any that they may have met/learnt at elementary or intermediate level, as we are not able to assess those). The results show that the number of expected new word types and families at the preparatory level compared with EFSA are 1490 types and 900 families, which means that students who study EFSA may find 47% of the word types (45.2% of the word families) in the RTs at the preparatory level are unfamiliar to them. In contrast, the number of expected new word types and families in the RTs at preparatory level compared with FHFSa is 954 word types (554 word families), which constitutes almost 30% and 27.8% of the total preparatory word types and families, respectively. This may result from the fact that FHFSa textbooks contain more RTs and far more tokens than EFSA textbooks, as we explained in 4.2.1. A further sign of the difference is that for students using EFSA, types and families unique to preparatory texts somewhat exceed those unique to EFSA texts; by contrast, users of FHFSa will find that types and families unique to preparatory texts are far fewer than those unique to FHFSa texts.

These results support what we found in 4.2.4.1: that neither EFSA nor even FHFSA texts could provide the students with the vocabulary items that are necessary to achieve minimum reading comprehension (corresponding to coverage of 95% of tokens). These results suggest that students may encounter difficulties in understanding the RTs at the preparatory level on their own, without any assistance from their teachers (assuming that students have not learnt any vocabulary in their English studies prior to the secondary level).

If we assume that the students have learned all the vocabulary items that they met at secondary level, we can next ask whether the amount of teaching hours at the preparatory level is enough for learning all the new words unique to the preparatory level. By doing a calculation to measure the vocabulary uptake required per hour to learn all the word types and families that are found only in the preparatory corpus, it appears that for the EFSA students, the lowest estimated rate is 3.72 word types (or 2.25 word families) per contact hour (400 hours) whereas for the new students who had studied FHFSA, the estimated rate is 2.38 word types (1.38 word families) per hour. This applies, of course, on the assumption that the students had learnt all the vocabulary items in their secondary RTs, and this is mostly unlikely to be the case. The estimated rate for students who have studied FHFSA is very close to the lower estimation of plausible vocabulary learning, which is 0.5 word types per hour (see 2.6.1.4), whereas the estimated rate for EFSA is closer to the higher estimation, which is 4.7 word types (see 2.6.1.4). This all therefore suggests that the students at the preparatory level may not find the RTs at the preparatory level too challenging for them in this respect regardless of what English series they have studied at the secondary level. However, FHFSA seems to be better in preparing the students for the RTs at the preparatory level.

Although FHFSA does better above, it seems that there is a cost. FHFSA is a good preparation in the sense that it leaves fewer new words to be met and learnt at preparatory level than EFSA does, but not so good on the argument that it includes a large number of word types that do not occur at all in the next level RTs at preparatory level. To put this argument in numbers, it appears in Table 4.11 that the RTs in FHFSA expose the students to 3404 word types (1748 word families) that do not occur in the RTs at the next educational level, whereas the RTs in EFSA contain slightly less than a third of the amount of such unnecessary vocabulary that FHFSA has (1268 types). This reflects what we have already noted (4.2.1), that the vocabulary load of the RTs in FHFSA is higher than that in EFSA.

Moving now to the comparison between the RTs at preparatory level, and the texts in each first year corpus, Table 4.12 shows the number and the percentage of the expected new word types and families in each FYU level corpus. The off-list is excluded for preparatory texts and English and translation texts, for reasons already stated. However, the off-list vocabulary items that appeared in the engineering and medicine corpora will be included in the comparison as they are mostly specialist terms that relate to these specific disciplines (for discussion of inclusion policy see 4.2.1).

Table 4.12: The numbers and percentages of word families and types that only occur in the first year corpora (off-list types excluded for Eng and tran only)

The Corpus	New word types		New word families	
	No.	%	No.	%
Prep. Vs. Med	4082	76.7%	3068	77.5%
Prep. Vs. Engn.	2640	68.5%	1503	60.14%
Prep. Vs. Eng. & Tra.	2149	53.1%	1125	46.8%

Table 4.12 shows the numbers and the percentages of the word types and families that do not occur in the preparatory RTs, but only occur in the FYU corpora. The results show that 53.1% of the word types in the Eng & tran reading texts, 68.5% of word types in the Engn corpus, and 76.7% of word types in the Med corpus do not occur in the Prep corpus. This indicates yet again that the gap between the preparatory RTs and FYU reading is greater than the gap between the RTs at the secondary level and the preparatory level (see Table 4.11). It is worth mentioning that the gap between the preparatory texts and those in engineering textbooks and medicine textbooks might be even greater, as in this study we only include a sample of the first year textbooks in these disciplines. Therefore, we could argue that the FYU students may experience great difficulties in understanding their textbooks, especially those who study medicine and engineering.

It appears from Table 4.12 that the Eng & tran corpus contains the lowest percentage of word types that are not shared with the RTs at the preparatory level. We have already explained that this may be because all the RTs in the Eng and tran corpus are EGP texts on general topics, rather than ESAP academic texts about applied linguistics or English literature, as we will explain when we compare the topics at each education level in Section 4.6.

In addition, the results also suggest that there are great numbers of word types and families in the Prep corpus that do not exist in each of the first year corpora; these word types/families may burden the students with learning vocabulary which they do not later need, and may affect their learning of the vocabulary items that are actually important in their disciplines. These results may also support the idea of ESAP texts being used even at the preparatory level in order to expose the students to the vocabulary items used in their specific disciplines, as is supported by many researchers (Biber, 2006; Hyland, 2002; Hyland and Tse, 2007; also see 2.3).

Although the results show that the RTs at the preparatory level may not be sufficient in providing the students with the vocabulary items that they need and thus leave a huge number to be learnt in the first year, especially in medicine, this method of comparison may be viewed as unfair as the secondary level is also supposed to prepare the students for authentic academic texts. Therefore, as in earlier sections, we next compare all the RTs in the lower educational levels combined (secondary and preparatory) with the reading that students encounter in the FYU level in each of the three different disciplines as shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Total numbers and the percentages of possible new vocabulary types and families, unique to each FYU corpus, not shared with a secondary corpus combined with the preparatory corpus (off-list included for Engn and Med corpora but not for Eng & tra)

The Corpus	Eng & tra.				Engn.				Med.			
	Types		Families		Types		Families		Types		Families	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
EFSA and Prep	1630	40.2%	859	35.7%	2316	60.1%	1319	52.8%	3923	73.7%	2893	73%
FHFS A and Prep	1160	28.6%	615	25.6%	1901	49.4%	1109	44.4%	3604	67.7%	2638	66.6%

Generally, it can be seen in Table 4.13 that after finishing the secondary level and the preparatory year, and even if all words that learners are exposed to are learnt, there is still far too heavy a load of unknown word types and families that students will meet in first university year reading, especially those who study in the medicine and engineering colleges. Consistent with earlier findings (4.2.1), students who studied EFSA at secondary level are likely to be struggling more with unknown vocabulary items in all the disciplines than those who studied FHFS.

The results also show that the amount of new word types and families varies according to the disciplines. Once again, medicine texts contain the most new word types compared with the other disciplines, engineering, and English and translation. It is worth mentioning that these estimated new word types and families numbers in Engn and Med corpora are based on our samples taken from FYU textbooks, which may not represent the real new word types and families that encounter them in reality, which is expected to be much higher. However, the estimated new word types and families in Eng & tran corpus represents all the word types and families that are more likely to be unfamiliar to students in all the RTs that students encounter at the FYU level. Table 4.13 also shows that after study of the EFSA series at secondary level followed by the preparatory year, FYU students of English and translation might encounter a total of 1630 unfamiliar word types (859 word families) in the RTs.. However, the new word types and families drop to 1160 word types (615 word families) in Eng & tran reading texts.

In addition, it appears that if the students have studied FHFSA and learned all the vocabulary items in the RTs in this English series, followed by the preparatory year. Medical students would not, however, gain quite the same relative advantage from studying FHFSA rather than EFSA, since the differences in the expected numbers of new word types and families between the two combined corpora (EFSA + Prep and FHFSA + Prep) is small compared with other first year corpora.

The above confirms what we showed in earlier findings: that although the RTs at the lower educational levels (secondary and preparatory) seem to be helpful in preparing the students for first university reading in the English and translation department, they are far less helpful for the medicine and engineering students. First year students also need to learn large numbers of word types/families, which may not be achievable in one academic year, especially for the medicine

and engineering students, and given that the Med and Engn corpora represent only a sample of what the students really encounter, unlike the Eng & tran corpus. This may suggest that the FYU medicine and engineering students may need to receive further support in order to be able to read their university textbooks with adequate comprehension.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that great numbers of the word types / families that students have been exposed to in RTs during their study prior to FYU level study may not be helpful to improve their reading comprehension in their FYU reading, especially for medicine and engineering fields (although we must as always bear in mind that the Med and Engn corpora are only samples of the true amount of reading for those disciplines). Thus, these word types/families constitute, in a sense, a waste of effort and time if the students had learnt them. Although the FHFSA plus prep corpus provides better coverage for all the FYU level corpora, it appears again that students who study the RTs in FHFSA and at the preparatory level, and actually learn the words they are exposed to, may also waste more time and effort on words not needed later than the students who study the RTs in EFSA and preparatory level.

Overall, then, this section has largely confirmed the findings of previous sections. With respect to vocabulary load, it shows that only English and translation majors approach the ideal progression where the effort spent on learning vocabulary met at lower levels, in texts with high coverage by previous known vocabulary so facilitating learning of a manageable amount of new vocabulary they contain, is rewarded by that new vocabulary being relevant in turn to gain high coverage of texts read later, which contain a further manageable quantity of new vocabulary. Medicine and engineering students, on the other hand, find themselves having perhaps learnt large amounts of vocabulary that they do not meet again, and lacking the vocabulary they need to approach anything like 95% coverage of their first year textbooks. Between the two

secondary level textbooks, EFSA is really the more efficient in that while it contains far less vocabulary than FHFSA, it does not expose learners to excessive amounts of vocabulary that they may not need later.

4.3 Academic vocabulary (AWL)

In this section the six corpora will be investigated for representation of the AWL. As explained earlier (see 3.10.3.2) in the analysis of the academic vocabulary of the RTs in the three educational levels, we try to answer three sub-questions as can be seen in the following subtitles in this section.

4.3.1 How do the six corpora of reading texts differ in how much AWL vocabulary they contain (as tokens, types, and families)? Is there a graded progression of representation of AWL vocabulary across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for the vocabulary of texts at higher levels in these respects?

Unlike the preparatory and university levels, at secondary level, a heavy degree of exposure to academic words is not expected as it is not usual for foreign language students to read academic texts in the English class at school, and not all the students will join university after finishing the secondary level (although teaching English at the secondary level aims to prepare the students for the future study; see 1.4.1). However, it is also not expected that academic words would be totally ignored and left to the last minute, which means left entirely to the preparatory year. Meeting, and hopefully learning, these academic words would provide the learners with an advantage in terms of coverage of the reading that they will encounter in the English-medium

university, as the whole AWL covers around 10% of running words in academic text (Coxhead, 2000). Therefore, the secondary corpora were also investigated to examine how many of the academic word families, types, and tokens in the AWL (Coxhead, 2000) occurred in the RTs in the secondary level in each series.

Table 4.14 shows the percentages and the numbers of academic word tokens, types and families in each corpus.

Table 4.14: The percentages and numbers of Academic Word List tokens, types, and families (Coxhead, 2000) in each corpus

AWL		EFSA	FHFSA	Prep	Med	Engn	Eng & tra
Tokens	No.	508	1847	574	2312	3893	1563
	%	2.05	3.5	2.4	6.74	11.3	4.5
Types	No.	186	669	295	559	646	379
	%	5.3	9.75	7.45	10.5	16.7	8.15
Families	No.	134	358	204	330	376	261
	%	7.3	11.2	10	15.38	20.5	10.8

Generally, it is not surprising that the percentages of text covered by academic words in the FYU textbooks are higher than the percentages covered at the lower education levels, secondary and preparatory, as can be clearly seen in table 4.14. However, there is by no means a steady progression in percentage from secondary through to first year texts. The RTs at the preparatory level differ most from the engineering textbooks, and then the medicine textbooks, with respect to the percentage of total words classified as AWL vocabulary (Prep: 2.4%; Engn: 11.3%; Med: 6.74%). Although the percentage differences may appear small, if they are translated into words per page, the difference in input becomes obvious. If we say that a page of text is roughly 400 words, this would mean that the preparatory reading textbooks have, on average, almost 17

fewer AWL word tokens per page than do medicine textbooks, and almost 35 fewer AWL word tokens per page than do engineering textbooks. It is likely, then, that the RTs in preparatory textbooks are providing students neither with the exposure to the range of academic vocabulary nor with the number of encounters with academic vocabulary that they may need to develop successful comprehension of university medicine and engineering textbooks. By contrast, the difference in the percentage coverage by AWL word families in the RTs between the preparatory level (2.4%) and the English and translation FYU level (4.5%) seems small. However, the difference appears greater when it is turned into numbers per page (400 word tokens): the reading textbooks in the first year English and translation department contain, on average, 8 - 9 more AWL word tokens per page than the reading materials at preparatory level.

These findings show that there are great differences between the reading at preparatory level and the reading that first year students encounter in the three disciplines (especially engineering and medicine). This result is consistent with Miller (2011), who found huge differences in the percentage coverage by AWL word families between the university textbooks (in various disciplines) and ESL RTs that are used in pre-sessional courses in most American universities to prepare L2 students for academic texts.

In addition, looking at the coverage of the AWL in the RTs at secondary level and preparatory level, it is interesting to see that the percentage of academic word tokens in RTs in FHFSA (3.5%) is higher than the coverage percentage of the AWL word families in the RTs at preparatory level (2.4%), which is the next educational level. The coverage percentage of AWL word families at the preparatory level is, however, slightly higher than the coverage percentage of the AWL in the RTs in EFSA (2.05%). This may indicate that the RTs in FHFSA are more challenging and academic than the preparatory level, and may result from the fact that FHFSA

contains almost double the amount of RTs of the preparatory level. We may compare this with the findings of 4.2.1, where FHFSA also emerged out of place ahead of the preparatory series Top Notch: once again, we might feel that it is not that FHFSA is too high in academic vocabulary but rather that the preparatory reading is too low.

In addition, by looking at the numbers of the academic word tokens, it can be noted that the Med and Engn corpora contain higher numbers of the word tokens at 2312 and 3893 word tokens, respectively, than the other corpora (508 in EFSA, 1847 in FHFSA, 574 in prep and 1563 in Eng & tran). However, it is interesting to see that the FHFSA corpus contains more academic word tokens than the EFSA corpus, which is taught in the same level, and other corpora that are taught in higher levels such as prep and Eng & tran. This may give further indication that the RTs in FHFSA may be challenging for the students in the secondary level.

By looking at percentages of word types in each corpus, it can be noted that the Engn corpus has the highest percentage of academic word types at 16.7 %, then Med corpus at 10.5%. After that, FHFSA corpus comes in the third rank at 9.75%, followed by Eng & tran at 8.15%, prep corpus at 7.45% and finally EFSA at 5.3%. However, when we see the numbers of the academic word types in each corpus, we can note that the HFSA corpus contains the highest amount of word types at 669 word types, followed by Engn corpus with slightly fewer than FHFSA at 646, Med corpus at 559, Eng & tran corpus at 379 word types, prep corpus at 295 and finally EFSA at 186 word types. From these results we could argue that the RTs in FHFSA is the best in preparing the students for FYU level academic reading in terms of the academic vocabulary among the RTs in English series at the lower educational levels (secondary and preparatory). It is worth mentioning that this highest amount of word types in the FHFSA is maybe due to the large

amount of the vocabulary tokens in this corpus compared with other corpora, as we explained earlier in this chapter (see 4.2.1).

In addition, Table 4.14 also shows that the number of word families varies from one corpus to another. As we can see, at the FYU corpora, it appears that the Engn corpus includes the greatest amount of the word families at 376 word families, then Med corpus at 330 word families, and finally the Eng & tran corpus at 261 word families. This variation in the academic word families may relate to the different registers, and the types of texts in each corpus. It is possible that the medicine texts use specialised terminologies more heavily than the engineering texts. However, the RTs in the FYU in the English and translation department are mainly general texts that discuss general topics rather than specialised topics.

As it is shown above that the academic words may be considered important words and a great proportion of them are used in FYU reading, it is important to see how many word families are provided to the students to learn in the prior FYU level. As shown in Table 4.14, the FHFSA is better in providing the students with a great number of the academic word families (358 word families) than the other corpus in the lower educational level, which gives the FHFSA an advantage over the EFSA (134 word families) in secondary level, and the RTs in the preparatory level (204 word families). The results show that the students who will finish the preparatory level after studying FHFSA would have a better chance to learn more academic word families than the students who take the preparatory level after studying EFSA. Therefore, we could say that FHFSA is better in reducing the academic vocabulary learning burden at the first university level, where the students encounter many academic words, especially in Med and Engn corpora.

With regard to the progression of the academic word types and families over the three educational levels, secondary, preparatory, and FYU level, it can be noted that with the EFSA English series the amount of the academic word tokens, types, and families in the RTs is increasing over the three educational levels, although this increase is not steady, especially for the Med and Engn corpora. By contrast, with FHFSA the number of the word types and families are delivered in a fluctuating way, where the students encounter a great amount of the academic word types and families in RTs in FHFSA at secondary level, and the numbers of academic word type are decreased at the preparatory level, and then increased in a different way at the FYU level according to discipline. Although, with EFSA, the amount of the word types and families are delivered in a better way from the secondary level to the preparatory level, the students may not have the chance to encounter more academic word types and families as in FHFSA. It is worth mentioning that some of the words might be similar in different levels, so if we say that the students were exposed to 134 word families in EFSA and 204 word families in the preparatory level, this does not necessarily mean that they encounter 338 word families at the end of the preparatory level, as some words might be repeated. Later in this chapter, in section (4.3.3), more investigation was done in order to see how many academic word types and families only occur in each corpus at each educational level.

It is important to mention that although academic vocabulary is crucial for understanding L2 academic reading (see 2.6.1.2.2), it is surprising that while it is expected that the reading materials at preparatory level would include more academic vocabulary since learners will go on after that to meet academic texts, they focus more on the frequent words as it was explained earlier (see section 4.2.1) and omit about 64% of the academic word families in the AWL. This could hinder the students from learning the academic vocabulary which is needed for reading

academic texts, as Nation (2001) states that “any time spent learning [this list] is time well spent” (p. 196), and with only 570 word families (AWL) learners could be provided with a further 10% coverage on average in many different academic domains (Coxhead, 2011).

In addition, we find that the RTs in the preparatory level have even far below the percentage of academic words in RTs that are used in pre-sessional courses in most American universities to prepare L2 students for academic texts; Miller (2011), for example, cites 4.5% of running words. Although the percentage in Miller’s study may not be an ideal one, it gives us an indication about the percentage of academic vocabulary in RTs that are used at a similar stage and for similar purposes. Therefore, we could argue that the preparatory level is not so helpful in preparing the students to meet the academic reading in their FYU level, especially for medicine and engineering students.

Finally, it could be noted that the amount of the academic word families found in the EFSA, FHFSA, and prep textbooks are in the range of the amount of academic word families found in the RTs in EFL GE textbooks (see 2.6.1.6).

4.3.2 Does the amount of academic vocabulary in each corpus fit the figures one might expect at that level given the amount needed to prepare readers to at some point read both authentic non-academic texts (e.g. newspapers) and both general and specific academic texts with understanding?

It can be clearly shown from Figure 4.4 that the percentage of academic word tokens among the whole running words in EFSA, FHFSA, Prep, and Eng & tran corpus lie between the percentages of the academic words that are found in non-academic texts such as newspapers (4%) and novels (2%) (Nation and Chung, 2003) (see 2.6.1.2.2). Indeed, these are considered to

be important sources for the RTs of English textbooks (Miller, 2011). However, reading fiction and newspaper texts will not provide access to appropriate vocabulary for students who will later need to function in an academic context, and one of the teaching English objectives in the secondary level is to prepare the student for academic reading and for reading at university level. In addition, these results are quite similar to the percentages of AWL that were found in GE textbooks as reported by some studies (Hsu, 2009; DehGhaedi, 2013; Matsuoka & Hirsh, 2010; also see 2.6.1.6).

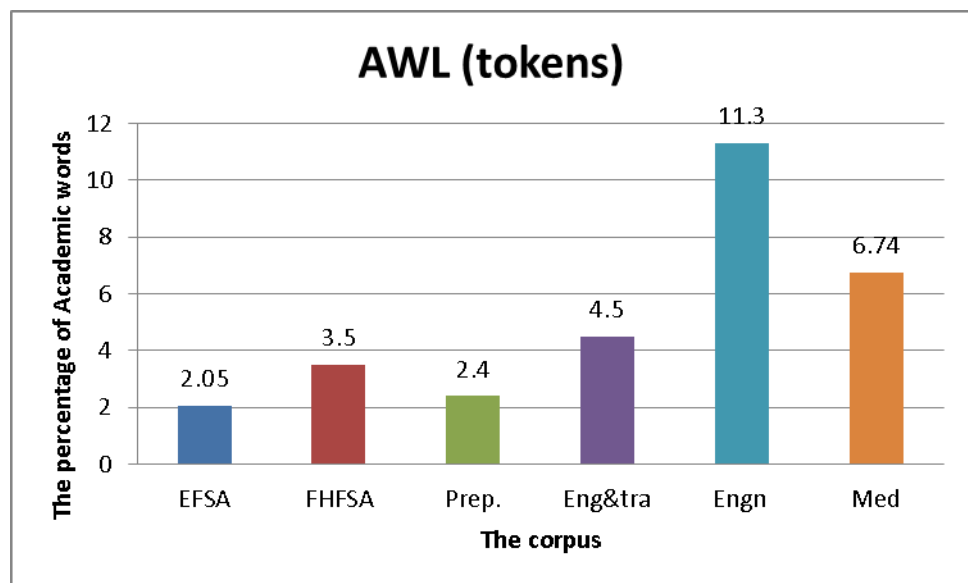


Figure 4.4: The percentage of the academic word tokens in each corpus based on AWL (Coxhead, 2000).

It is not surprising that the coverage of the AWL word families in the Eng & tran corpus is much lower than the expected from the academic texts; this is because the RTs in this corpus are not taken from specialised textbooks in this discipline, but they are taken from reading textbooks that contain texts covering various general topics which are quite similar to the RTs in the lower educational levels.

In contrast, the text coverage of the AWL word families in the Med corpus in the current study is 6.74%, slightly lower than the 8.5 - 10% suggested by Coxhead and Nation (2001), and also lower than the 8.6% reported by Nation and Chung (2003), when they investigated the anatomy textbook, but it is consistent with the figure reported by Cobb and Horst (2004), which is 6.72% for the Med corpus. Cobb and Horst (2004) related the lower percentage in the medicine texts to the high proportion of technical vocabulary in the medicine field. However, the consistency between the results of the current study and Cobb and Horst's (2004) study is possibly owing to the small size of corpus in these studies compared with Nation and Chung's (2003).

In addition, the coverage of AWL word families among all the running words in the Engn corpus is 11.3%, somewhat higher than the (10%) higher estimation percentage pointed at by Coxhead and Nation (2001); however, it is consistent with Hyland and Tse (2007), who found that AWL coverage in the engineering texts is 11.3%.

4.3.3 Does the amount of academic vocabulary in each corpus provide an appropriate balance between representing word families that already occurred at lower levels (so may have been learnt) and new families that need to be learnt in order to be ready for later levels?

This section provides a clear picture about the actual differences between the amount of the word types and families that occur in the RTs in one level, and the amount of the word types and families in the next level RTs that may be considered unknown words that need to be learned for improving the reading comprehension level.

Table 4.15 illustrates the numbers of academic word families and types based on AWL (Coxhead, 2000) that are shared and not shared between the RTs in EFSA and preparatory

reading materials. It also shows the numbers of the academic word types and families that are shared and not shared between the RTs in the FHFSA and RTs at the preparatory level.

Table 4.15: The number of the academic word families that occur in the secondary level corpora and preparatory corpus

Secondary level corpus		Unique to secondary corpus	Shared	Unique to the Prep corpus
EFSA	Types	100	86	209
	Families	44	90	114
FHFSA	Types	470	199	96
	Families	189	169	35

By comparing between academic word families that occur in the EFSA corpus, and in the preparatory corpus, it can be noted that the RTs in the preparatory year expose the students to only 114 out of 570 academic word families that may be new to them as they do not occur in the RTs in the EFSA series. This amount of word families makes up about 19.8% of the 570 AWL word families (Coxhead, 2000). Thus, assuming that the students have learnt all the academic words in their RTs, we could conclude that the students in our study are exposed to only 248 out of 570 academic word families, which makes up 43.5% of the AWL when they finish their formal English instruction in the public secondary level school taught with EFSA and followed by the preparatory level, which together last for 4 years. However, the results show that 45.9% of total academic words that students are expected to learn (248 word families) are provided in the preparatory level, whereas the remaining academic word families (134 word families) may be learned in the secondary level, which lasts for three years (44 word families per year on average). This means that the amount of the academic word families that is provided to the students to be learnt in the preparatory level is more than double that of the academic word families in each secondary level year on average.

With regard to the comparison between the academic words that only occur in the FHFSA corpus and the preparatory corpus, and the academic words that are shared in both corpora, Table 4.15 shows that the FHFSA corpus contains 358 academic word families in total and the preparatory RTs would add only 35 academic word families to the students' academic vocabulary knowledge at the preparatory level, which makes up only 6.1% of the total academic word families in the AWL. It clear that the FHFSA is superior to preparatory RTs in exposing the students to the academic word families at around 119 word families per year on average compared with 35 word families.

From the above results, we could see that FHFSA is, again, better than EFSA in preparing for the preparatory RTs in terms of academic vocabulary. However, the RTs in the FHFSA seem to be more challenging and also provide the secondary students with much academic vocabulary items that may make learning them difficult for the students. This is the same scenario which we saw in determining which English series is better in preparing for the preparatory reading in terms of general vocabulary (see 4.2.1).

However, in deciding which secondary textbook is better, we need to go to the objectives of teaching English at the secondary and preparatory levels (see 1.4.1 and 1.5.1), where, according the objectives, the secondary reading materials are supposed to prepare the students for university reading, and the preparatory year aims to minimise the gap between the reading in the secondary and the FYU levels. Hence, we could argue that FHFSA is better, but the preparatory reading corpus needs to be revised by the NBU authorities.

Table 4.16 shows the differences in the number of academic word families between the RTs at the preparatory level only and those in the three FYU disciplines (English & translation,

engineering and medicine). The results show that although there are some academic word families shared between each FYU corpus and the prep corpus, there are a great number of academic word families that do not occur in the preparatory level, especially for the Engn and Med corpora. These findings reveal the great gap in terms of the AWL between the RTs at the preparatory level and the reading that encounter FYU students, and displays the weakness of the RTs at the preparatory level in covering the AWL.

Table 4.16: The number of the shared and not shared academic word families and types between each FYU corpus and the prep corpus

The corpus		Only in first year corpus	Shared	Only in prep corpus
Engn	Types	519	127	168
	Families	231	145	59
Med	Types	430	129	166
	Families	201	129	75
Eng & tran	Types	231	148	147
	Families	124	137	67

Since the secondary level also aims to prepare the students for reading academic texts at the university, as stated in the teaching English objectives at the secondary level (see 1.4.1), it is worth investigating and comparing the academic word families that are taught in the two lower educational levels (secondary and preparatory) with those encountered by the students in their reading at the FYU. This would provide us a clear picture about the amount of the academic word families that may be unfamiliar to the students in each discipline. By looking at Table 4.17, it can be noted that the students who studied FHFSA at the secondary level followed by the preparatory level may find that the majority of the word families that encountered them in the previous levels also appear in the FYU level reading. For example, for the engineering students, 272 out of 376 word families were shared in the Engn corpus; for the medicine students, 245 out

of 330 were shared in the Med corpus, and for the English and translation students, 224 out of 261 were shared in Eng & tran corpus. However, there are a number of academic word families that might be unfamiliar to the FYU students, and the amount of these unknown families varies from one discipline to another. As is shown in Table 4.17, the most unknown word families occur in the Engn corpus at 104 word families, followed by the Med corpus at 85 word families, and finally the Eng & tran corpus at 37 word families. It is important to remind the reader that the Engn and Med corpora are, unlike Eng & tran corpus, represent only a small sample of what the students will encounter in reality. Thus, these results indicate that the RTs at the lower education levels are more helpful in preparing the English and translation students in terms of the AWL than the Engineering and medicine students.

Table 4.17: The number of shared and not shared academic word families and types between each first year corpus and the (prep + FHSA) corpus

The corpus		Only in first year corpus	Shared	Only in prep +FHSA
Engn	Types	289	357	408
	Families	104	272	121
Med	Types	272	287	478
	Families	85	245	148
Eng & tra	Types	72	304	461
	Families	37	224	169

With regard to students who studied EFSA and preparatory level, the results in Table 4.18 show that, unlike FHSA, the number of the new academic word families in Engn (206 word families) and Med corpora (176 word families) outnumbers the shared academic word families between the (EFSA + Prep) corpus and the Med (at 167 word families) and Engn (at 177 word families) corpora, which may suggest that students may encounter a great number of new academic word

tokens in their reading textbooks in these two disciplines, especially if we know that the Med and Engn corpora represent only a sample of what the students read at these disciplines. However, with the Eng & tran corpus, the shared number of academic word families (167 word families) is higher than the new academic word families (94 word families). These results suggest that RTs at the pre-university level are more helpful for the English and translation students than the medical and engineering students as, and this is also suggested when we compare the general vocabulary loads in section 4.2.1.

Table 4.18: The number of shared and not shared academic word families and types between each first year corpus and the (prep + EFSA) corpus

The corpus		Only in first year corpus	Shared	Only in prep +EFSA
Engn	Types	449	197	198
	Families	206	170	77
Med	Types	392	167	228
	Families	176	154	94
Eng & Tra	Types	187	192	203
	Families	94	167	81

From the above, it appears that the FYU students still encounter new academic words even after spending 4 years preparing for the academic reading. I hope this finding could help the decision maker in the Ministry of Education and the NBU to pay more attention to the AWL, since it could provide students with a great percentage of coverage, which may improve the reading comprehension level.

4.4 Readability

This section aims to present the results and discussion of the comparison of the RTs that encounter the students in the three educational levels in terms of the readability scores and the average of sentence and length words. This section aims to answer two sub-questions as appears in the following subtitles.

4.4.1 How do the six corpora of reading texts differ in readability (using standard measures)? Is there a graded progression of readability across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for higher levels in this respect?

Table 4.19 presents the results of the readability analysis of the RTs using five different standard measures (see section 2.6.3 in chapter two).

Table 4.19: Readability statistics for all six corpora (EFSA, FHFSA, Prep, Med, Engn, Eng & tran)

Measure	EFSA	FHFSA	Prep	Med	Engn	Eng & tran
Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease (FRE) (higher figures mean easier)	72.1	64.4	75.9	37.2	45.2	60.8
Flesch-Kincaid Grade level (FGL) (lower figures mean easier)	6.3	8.5	5	12.5	11.9	8.6
Coleman-Liau Index (CLI) (lower figures mean easier)	10.1	10.6	9.5	15.4	13.3	11.8
SMOG Index (lower figures mean easier)	6.8	8.3	5.9	11.6	11.2	8.4
Gunning-Fog Score (FGS) (lower figures mean easier)	8.3	10.8	5	15.8	15.1	10.9

Generally, it is not surprising to see that the readability scores for the FYU level corpora indicate greater difficulty than the readability scores of the RTs at the lower educational levels. However, it is surprising to find that the readability scores of the RTs at the preparatory level on all measures indicate greater ease than the readability scores at the lower educational level

(secondary level) regardless of English series. Furthermore, preparatory level reading is, on the FGL measure, between three and seven native speaker school grades easier than first year reading – based on the FGL scale (Kincaid et. al (1975) – depending on the discipline. This suggests that the RTs do not follow a graded progression of readability over successive levels, such as one would expect. For instance, it does not suggest that preparatory level texts will be at $i+1$ in the sense of Krashen (1981), unless students have failed to learn very much at all from English RTs at school. On the other hand, medicine texts, relative to preparatory reading, will perhaps be at $i+3$, so far too demanding.

In addition, the readability scores at the FYU level vary according to the discipline. In particular, all measures show the readability of the RTs in the Med and Engn corpora to be considerably more difficult than that of the Eng & tran reading texts, which come out only very slightly more difficult than texts at earlier levels (esp. FHFSA). The nature of the texts read in the Eng and tran first year explains this, as we have already mentioned. On all measures, Med texts come out as slightly harder than Engn ones, consistent with the results in 4.2. All these results support what we found from the general vocabulary comparison and AWL comparison in the previous sections (see 4.2 and 4.3). Once again, we also see from the scores in Table 4.19 that RTs in FHFSA are the best in preparing the students for their genuinely academic reading at the FYU level in medicine and engineering. In readability, FHFSA would fit the desired progressive sequence better, as the preparatory year textbooks (Top Notch) could be better used as a secondary school one, or even at intermediate level before EFSA.

With regard to the differences between the RTs at the secondary level (EFSA and FHFSA), parallel with previous findings, all the readability measures show that the RTs in FHFSA are more difficult than the RTs in EFSA. In fact, according to FGL, the RTs in FHFSA are more

difficult by two school grades (estimated in native speaker terms) than the RTs in the EFSA, although the two English series are used at the same level of education. Since we have no measures from other studies of readability at previous education levels, it could be said that the RTs in FHFSA may be challenging for the students at the secondary level, especially if they are not well prepared for reading at this level before they come to secondary school. However, nowadays English is taught from the fourth grade at the elementary level, so this might enable those students to be ready to read at this level of readability, though one would have to do a proper analysis of the textbooks used at elementary and intermediate levels to support this. With regards to the students who started their English study in the sixth grade, we suspect that they may find that EFSA is more suitable for them, and FHFSA is too challenging and may be frustrating for them. In chapter seven, the students' perspectives regarding the RTs in both textbooks will be presented.

In the literature (see 2.6.3.1 and 2.6.6.2), we found that in Jordan the difficulty of RTs at EFL secondary level was reported as 59.7 (cited in Freahat, 2014) on the FRE measure, so harder than ours. By contrast, in Iran the FRE score was 76.8 (from Riazi & Mosalanejad, 2010), so easier than ours in terms of Flesch Reading Ease. In addition, both secondary English series readability scores were almost between the lower and higher estimation (the FRE scores 89.87 and 41.55, respectively) in Brown's (1998) study on the readability scores of the RTs in 12th grade textbooks that were commonly used in Japan. Thus, it could be said that EFSA (or Top Notch) is closer to the low estimate, whereas FHFSA is closer to the high estimate. Furthermore, our finding that both secondary English series (especially FHFSA) are harder than the preparatory reading is inconsistent with Freahat (2014), who found that the EFL RTs in the university English textbook (equivalent to Top Notch in our study) in Jordan were clearly more

difficult than the RTs at the secondary level in terms of readability scores (see 2.6.6.2). However, it is partly in line with Brown (1998), who found that the RTs in two out of four 12th grade textbooks were more difficult than the RTs in the EFL English textbooks used at university level. Finally, by looking at the readability scores of the RTs at the preparatory level only, it can be noted that it is very close to the readability scores of the RTs used in a similar context (Jordan), which is in FRE 75 (Freahat, 2014), but it is easier than the RTs used in Japan, which is in FRE 64 (Brown, 1998). This may be due to the quite different situation in Japan, where the students have to pass a demanding English university entrance exam.

4.4.2 How do the six corpora of reading texts differ in mean sentence and word length?

Is there a graded progression of these features across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for higher levels in this respect?

The measures of sentence length (in words) and of word length (in letters) are broadly indicative of the surface syntactic complexity and lexical difficulty of a text (Oakland & Lane, 2004; also see the readabilities formula in 2.6.3). Although they are the main foundations of readability measures covered above, we consider them here separately so as to compare with the findings of other studies.

Figure 4.5 shows a similar pattern to that of all the readability measures, except that medicine and engineering are reversed. The Engn and Med corpora contain the longest average sentence lengths at 19.8 and 18 words per sentence, on average, respectively. This suggests that the Med and Engn corpora may contain more complex sentences, since greater length allows for more embedded clauses, which may make reading more demanding for the students. This is not surprising as only the Med and Engn corpora contain truly academic texts used in these

disciplines which are taken from specialised textbooks that may also be used by English native speakers. In addition, the results also show that the RTs in FHFSa contain longer sentences than the RTs in EFSA and Top Notch, and even longer than the RTs at the FYU level in the English and translation department. This may indicate that FHFSa is too challenging in syntactic complexity for students at the secondary level, and would be more suited to the preparatory level, while the RTs in the Prep and Eng & tran corpora are not challenging enough but rather easy for the students at their levels.

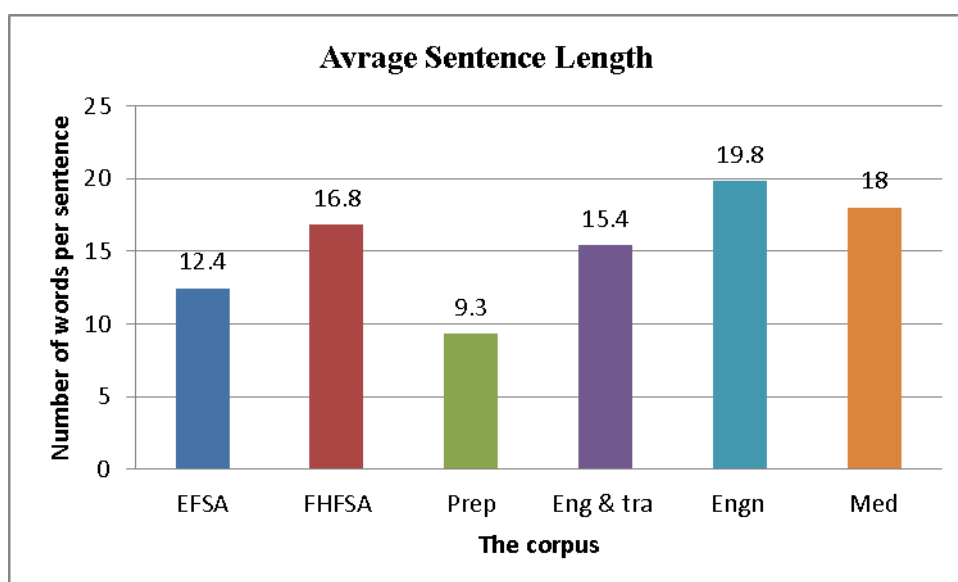


Figure 4.5: Average sentence length in reading texts in the EFSA, FHFSa, Prep, Eng & tran, Engn, and Med corpora

Regarding the differences between the two English series taught at the secondary level, clearly the RTs in FHFSa are not as easy in terms of sentence length as RTs in the EFSA textbooks because they include longer sentences (by more than around 4-5 words per sentence on average), which provide space for more clauses and phrasal embedding and intricate clausal structure (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2008; Greenfield, 2004; Gunning, 2003; Miller, 2011). However, since the RTs at pre-secondary level are outside the scope of the study, it is hard to tell from the text

analysis whether students would face difficulties in navigating to the RTs in either EFSA or FHFSa.

With regard to the comparison between the average sentence length in the RTs at the secondary and preparatory level, it is surprising to see that the RTs in the preparatory year contain considerably shorter sentences, by at least three words on average, than those in the RTs in the secondary level texts in both English series and are way shorter than the first year Eng and tran texts (by 6 words per sentence on average), let alone those in the Med and Engn corpora. This indicates that the sentence level in these RTs tends to be simple sentences with one clause, which may not be hard to parse (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2008; Miller, 2011). It is surprising that the RTs at the preparatory level do not contain the long sentences that tend to be used commonly in academic texts and that include more complex structures. These findings appear to contradict those of Miller (2011), who found only small differences in the average sentence length between the ESL reading textbooks used in his context and the university textbooks (16.82 for ESL textbooks, and 18.61 for university textbooks). It is interesting to note that the average sentence length of the ESL reading textbooks is similar to the average sentence length in FHFSa, which again suggests the FHFSa seems to be better than other English series used in the secondary and preparatory level in preparing the students for university reading. In addition, it is interesting to see the average sentence length of the university textbooks at Miller's (2011) study is very close to average sentence length in Engn and Med corpora, but higher than the average sentence length at the Eng & tran corpus. This might be because the RTs in Eng & tran are not specialised university textbooks.

The results in Figure 4.5 also indicate variation between first year disciplines: clearly academic texts in the engineering corpus are of greater syntactic complexity than those in the first year

textbook in the English and translation department, and even than those in medicine. The greater difficulty implied in engineering texts than in medicine texts in sentence length goes against the results of the standard readability measures in 4.4.1 and the findings on vocabulary in general in 4.2 but agrees with the AWL findings in 4.3. Thus, at this point, it appears that while engineering texts are more syntactically complex and use more general academic vocabulary than medicine texts, it is medicine texts that contain rarer technical terms, which are longer words and hence make medicine texts come out as harder on the readability measures.

From the above, overall, we could argue that the RTs once again do not exhibit the graded progression we would expect in terms of the average sentence length, so that students would be exposed to more complex sentences systematically at higher educational levels. A lack of student preparedness for first year reading could be a function of different text demands and preparation for those demands, rather than simply a deficiency in student reading ability. In other words, secondary school graduates who study EFSA may be able to successfully read the RTs they were exposed to at secondary level, and those at preparatory level. However, due to the gap between the average length of sentences in secondary and preparatory level RTs and the average length of sentences encountered at the FYU level, previously successful learners may still appear to be unprepared after the preparatory level basically because their sentence parsing skills did not have the chance to develop enough for RTs at the university level (i.e. this is another example of the preparatory year not being at the requisite $i+1$ level of demand, but just at i or $i-1$).

Figure 4.6 illustrates the average word lengths across the six corpora. Somewhat surprisingly, no great difference was found between the EFSA and FHFSA. We have already seen in the lexical comparison sections 4.2 and 4.3 above that the vocabulary is very different, and harder in

FHFSA, but that does not show up in the word length, which demonstrates how weak word length is as an indicator of readability. Once again Prep texts are slightly lower than FHFSA whereas Eng and tran texts are slightly higher. On average, words in the Med corpus are the longest, presumably due the nature of medicine terminology, which includes a large number of long Greco-Latin words such as *Lymphangiogram*, *Bronchopulmonary*, *Chondrosarcoma*, and *Rhabdomyolysis*. The greater mean word length in medical versus engineering texts agrees with our interpretation above of why medicine also emerges as more demanding than engineering in 4.2 and 4.4.1 (where readability measures appear to be more sensitive to their word length than their sentence length components), but not in 4.3 or on sentence length above.

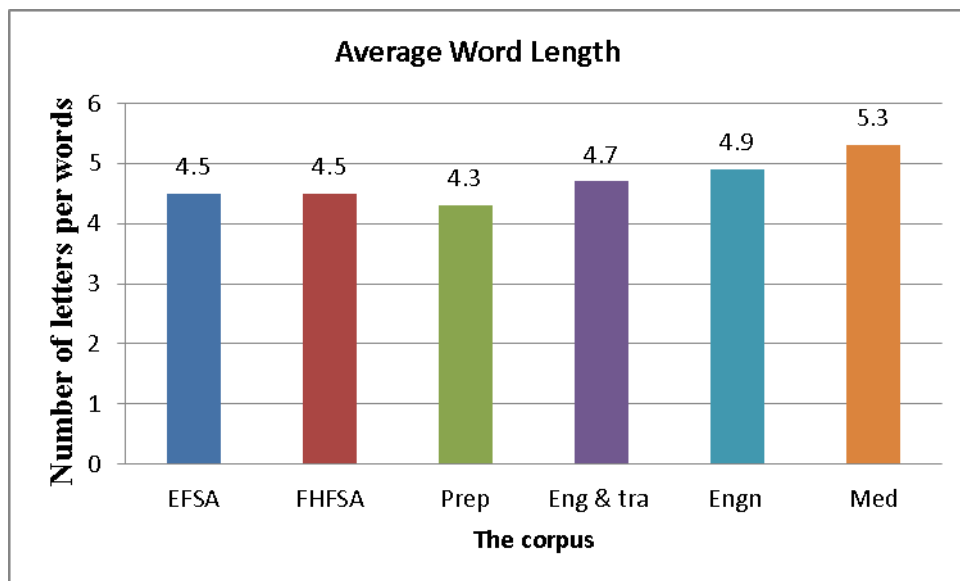


Figure 4.6: Average word length in reading texts in the EFSA, FHFSA, Prep, Eng & tran, Engn, and Med corpora

The considerable differences found between the mean word lengths of preparatory and first year texts are not in line with Miller's (2011) study, which found no significant differences between the average word length in ESL RTs and university textbook excerpts (4.74 and 5.02, respectively).

4.5 Syntactic features of the academic register

In this section we attempt to answer the question: How do the six corpora of RTs differ in the amount of distinctively academic syntactic features they exhibit? Is there a graded progression of this amount across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for the academic syntax they will meet at higher levels?

Figures 4.7 and 4.8 illustrate the frequency of occurrence of our chosen nine academic syntactic features per thousand words in the RTs in each corpus.

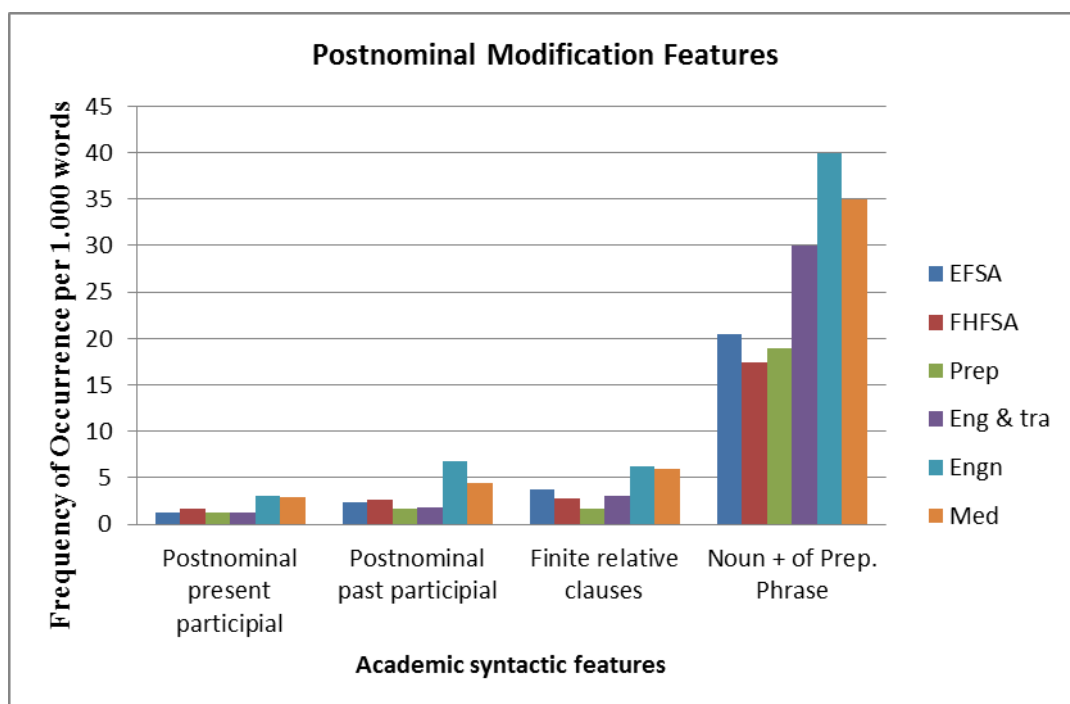


Figure 4.7: Frequency of occurrence of postnominal modifications in the six corpora

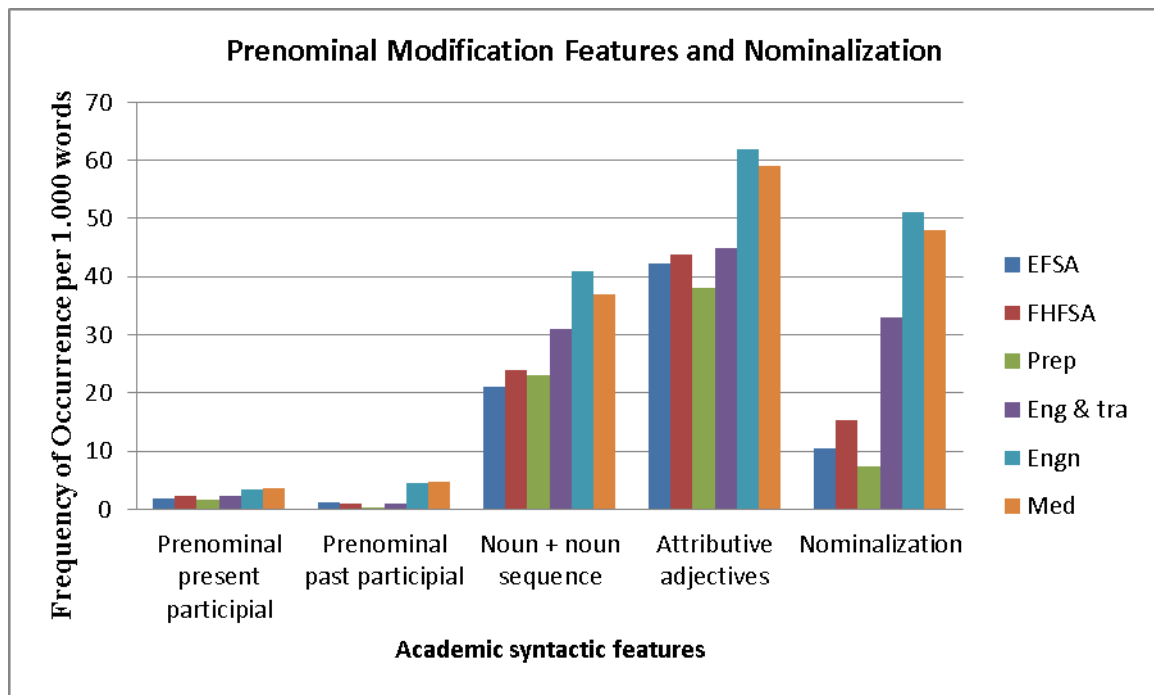


Figure 4.8: Frequency of occurrence of prenominal modification and nominalization by corpus

Regarding the similarities and differences between the RTs in EFSA and FHFSa, there are surprisingly three features where EFSA is slightly higher than the FHFSa, including the highly frequent noun + *of* phrase pattern, though six versus three academic syntactic features are still more frequent in FHFSa. Although it seems that the RTs in FHFSa are slightly more demanding than the EFSA RTs in terms of academic syntactic features, it is difficult to judge which is the most appropriate for the students at secondary level since we do not have knowledge (figures) about the RTs at the previous levels (elementary and intermediate levels). Furthermore, it is not clear in the literature, and it may hard to determine, what the appropriate figures for these academic syntactic features really are for RTs in EFL secondary level texts. Grabe (2009), for example, offers no more than the rather vague advice that in order to make students achieve “fluency and automaticity with syntactic processing...they need extensive exposure and practice in reading and exploiting relevant and appropriate texts.” (p. 216).

By inspecting Figures 4.7 and 4.8, it is plain that the frequencies of occurrence of the syntactic features in preparatory texts are slightly below those for the RTs at the secondary level in seven out of the nine instances, a pattern we have seen many times on other measures in earlier sections. For example, the number of occurrences of nominalization is around seven per thousand words, compared with 10 and 15 nominalized words per thousand words in the EFSA and FHFSA corpora, respectively. This may indicate that the students will find the RTs at preparatory level easier and less challenging than the RTs at the secondary level. On the majority of syntactic features, we could, in fact, argue, as we have done in earlier sections, that the RTs of FHFSA are a more suitable preparation for the frequencies found in first year reading than the RTs in the EFSA textbooks and in the preparatory year reading materials.

The results show that the FYU corpora again vary in employing these selected academic syntactic features. As usual, it can be clearly seen in Figures 4.7 and 4.8 that the Eng & tran corpus contains the least amount of these academic syntactic features compared with the Med and Engn corpora, though with respect to nominalization and the noun + *of* phrase construction it notably does exhibit frequencies closer to those of the other two disciplines than to the those at lower academic levels. As always, an explanation for this is that the Eng & tran corpus contains RTs that are not academic or specialised as they concern general topics and are used for the teaching of English reading, not the subject matter of English literature or linguistics. Hence, students will not be so challenged reading Eng and tran texts, compared with Med or Engn ones, given their relatively light exposure to academic syntactic features at earlier levels.

From Figures 4.7 and 4.8 it can also be clearly seen that there are huge differences between the frequencies of the academic grammatical structures in the RTs at the preparatory level and in the first year, especially in engineering and medicine materials, indicating the familiar lack of

graded progression. Engineering records the highest frequencies, which is consistent with its leading position with respect to sentence length (see 4.4.2) and the other academic feature we measured, AWL (see 4.3). The results of the current study are in line with those of Miller (2011), who found that the ESL RTs used in his American university were extremely different from the type of language that the ESL student encountered in their university textbooks in terms of the academic syntactic features (see 2.6.6.1). In addition, it can also be noted that frequencies of occurrence of many academic syntactic features in Med and Engn corpora are closer to the ones in Miller's (ibid) university textbooks than the Eng & tran ones. This is due to the reason we explained earlier that the RTs in the Eng & tran corpus are not specialised authentic academic texts. Moreover, FHFSA is the closest to Millers' ESL textbooks, unlike the Prep corpus, which is far below, which may give this English series again more advantage to be taught at least at the preparatory level. In addition, it is the closest one that supports Biber's (2006) view that the students need to be exposed to features that they will encounter in their real academic study.

4.6 The reading text themes/topics

The final element of comparison we chose to pursue between the RTs in each educational level is the topics. This section therefore aims to answer the following questions: How do the six corpora of RTs differ in number and choices of text topics? Do topics match the declared aims for their level? Is there a graded progression of topics across levels, as one might expect, so that texts at lower levels prepare students for the content they will need to read at higher levels?

First, we compare the topics of the RTs in each English textbook series (EFSA and FHFSA), bearing in mind the documented Ministry objectives (see 1.4.1), and how these topics would help the students towards later reading in their academic contexts.

Tables 4.20 and 4.21 present all the RTs' titles that are covered in each English series. The results show that FHFSA presents more RTs than EFSA at 46 titles and 32 titles, respectively, which in turn makes FHFSA include a wider range of topics than EFSA.

Table 4.20: The titles of the reading texts in the FHFSA textbook series

FHFSA		
Year One	Year two	Year Three
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life stories 2. Work and play 3. Towards the future 4. Places to live 5. World money 6. Entertainment 7. Living culture 8. Good health 9. Imagination 10. Seeing the world 11. Progress 12. Consumerism 13. Relationships and communication 14. Work and money 15. Keeping up with the technology 16. House and home 17. Crime and Law 18. Mass media 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trends in technology 2. Big moments 3. Crossing culture 4. Life as a journey 5. Stages of life 6. The future 7. The 20th century 8. People and technology 9. Family, friends and colleagues 10. The best of the past 11. Into the future 12. The world of sports 13. Knowing the market 14. Looking forwards 15. Free time 16. Animals in the Kingdom 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning for life 2. Appliance of science 3. Come on! sport 4. Culture, old and new 5. History's mysteries 6. Shop until you drop 7. Study plans 8. Work experience 9. Space and time 10. Extraordinary behaviour 11. Money talks 12. Healthy habits

Table 4.21: The titles of the reading texts in the EFSA textbook series

EFSA		
Year one	Year two	Year three
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The man in focus programme (Hajj) 2. The first programme (in focus- Hajj) 3. Going to school in USA 4. Different kinds of houses 5. Money – Saudi currency. 6. Before Hajj with Hamza 7. On Hajj with Hamza 8. At the restaurant (food) 9. Games in KSA 10. At the clinic 11. Learning English 12. Teaching and training vocational school in Saudi Arabia 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fire fighters 2. Safety in the home 3. The early spread of Islam 4. The food which we eat 5. Saudi yesterday and today 6. The environment 7. Oil in Saudi Arabia 8. The Saudi Postal service 9. Refreshing drink Tea 10. Muslims in China 11. Shopping 12. Health Care 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Water 5. Conversation 6. Travel in Saudi Arabia 7. The Holy Month of Ramadan 8. Plant earth 9. Arab Aid 10. English literature 11. Universities in Saudi Arabia 12. King Abdul-Aziz Al Saudi 13. Saudi explorers in the Antarctic 14. Calligraphy in Arabic 15. The Holy Mosque in Makkah

However, by looking at Tables 4.20 and 4.21, it could be noted that there are some titles that are almost repeated in different secondary study years, signalling a similar topic, theme or content. For example, in FHFSA it can be noted that *culture* is repeated in each year of the secondary stage: in year one *Living Culture*, in year two *Crossing Culture*, and in year three *Culture, Old and New*. Therefore, all the similar titles were next grouped together in order to extract the range of distinct topics or themes that are presented in each English series (see Tables 4.22 and 4.23).

Table 4.22: The titles of the reading texts in FHFSA grouped under the main themes

Family and relationships <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relationships and communication 2. Extraordinary behaviour 3. Family, friends and colleagues 	Future <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Towards the future 2. Imagination 3. The future 4. Into the future 	Work <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress 2. Work experience 3. Work and play 4. Work and money
Life experiences <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stage of life 2. Life a journey 3. Life stories 	Culture <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Living culture 2. Culture, old and new 3. Crossing culture 	Money and shopping <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The world money 2. Consumerism 3. Money talk 4. Shop until you drop 5. Knowing the market
Technology <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trends technology 2. People and technology 3. Appliance of science 4. Keeping with the technology 	Entertainment and travel <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Free time 2. Seeing the world 3. Space and time 4. Entertainment 5. Place to live 6. Animals in Kingdom 	Study and Learning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study plans 2. Learning for life 3. Looking forwards
Sport <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The world of sports 2. Come on! sport 	Past events <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Big moments 2. The 20th century 3. History's mysteries 4. The best of the past 	Health <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good health 2. Healthy habits
Home <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. House and home 	Crime <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crime and Low 	Media <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mass media

Table 4.23: The titles of the reading texts in EFSA grouped under the main themes

Food	Islam	Saudi Arabia and Arabic context
1. At the restaurant (food)	1.The man in focus programme (Hajj)	1. Money – Saudi currency.
2. Refreshing drink Tea	2.The first programme (in focus- Hajj)	2. Oil in Saudi Arabia
3. The food which we eat	3.The early spread of Islam	3. The Saudi Postal service
Health	4. The Holy Month of Ramadan	4. King Abdul-Aziz Al Saudi
1. Health Care	5. Before Hajj with Hamza	5. Saudi explorers in Antarctic
2. At the clinic	6. On Hajj with Hamza	6. Travel in Saudi Arabia
	7. Muslims in China	7. Saudi yesterday and today
	8. The Holy Mosque in Makkah	8. Games in Saudi Arabia
		9. Arab Aid
		10. Calligraphy in Arabic.
Fire	Study & learning	Environment
1. Fire fighters	1. Learning English	1. Different kinds of houses
2. Safety in the home	2. Teaching training vocational school in Saudi Arabia	2. Water
	3. Universities in Saudi Arabia	3. Conversation
	4. Going to school in USA	4. The environment
	5. English Literature	5. Earth plant
		Shopping
		1. Shopping

Tables 4.22 and 4.23 show all the topics of the RTs that occurred in FHFSA and EFSA. It appears that all the RTs in FHFSA are covered under 15 main topics, whereas in the EFSA the RTs are covered by 8 main topics. From this result we may say that EFSA might not seem an ideal English series for many students and teachers due to its narrow range of topics. As Wang and Tinker Sachs (2013) argue, exposing the student to a limited number of topics means exposing the students to a restricted range of vocabulary, syntax, registers, and other writing styles. This is supported by our study, since we have shown above that FHFSA indeed provides more general vocabulary and more academic vocabulary and syntax than EFSA. Furthermore, exposing the student to a variety of topics would not only help the student improve their vocabulary associated with these topics but also read various texts about different topics.

The findings so far show that FHFSA is better in exposing the students to more varied topics than EFSA. However, this might not be advantageous in practice: it all depends on whether they can be covered effectively during the period of study, as English is taught for only four classes per week in secondary school.

An important further consideration is how familiar the topics are, since difficulty of RTs is increased if the reader does not possess background knowledge of the content (or a relevant content schema, see 2.6.4). Tables 4.22 and 4.23 show that EFSA topics are more related to the Saudi context than FHFSA ones, which might make them more accessible and familiar given the students' background and culture, and hence leave students free to concentrate on the language of the texts. FHFSA, by contrast, might be more challenging for the students for two reasons: first, it includes a larger number of topics; second, some of the RTs do not focus on the Saudi context or any specific context but they represent international topics.

With regard to which English series seems to be better in achieving the aims of teaching English in Saudi Arabia, there are three objectives that are related to the topics (see 1.4.1) as follows:

1. To help the student gain a reasonable command of English in order to be in a better position to defend Islam against adverse influences and to participate in dissemination of Islamic culture.
2. To enable the student to speak English well and to give them the opportunity to preach the principles of Islam.
3. To foster in the student an interest in reading so that later on they are prepared to read many reference books, periodicals and pamphlets on the subject of their future field of specialization.

The above first two objectives are related to religion, so in order for these objectives to be achieved, the students need to be exposed to RTs covering Islamic topics. It can be seen from Tables 4.22 and 4.23 that EFSA contains RTs that cover this topic more than FHFSA does, which may help in achieving these objectives. However, I believe that these Islamic related objectives would need specially designed textbooks and extra hours of study.

With regard to the third aim, which is more related to our study, as it refers to the preparation for future academic reading in a specialist subject, it is hard at this stage of analysis to give a final word as later in this thesis (see chapter five) students' and their teachers' perspectives regarding this matter will be discussed. However, we attempt to offer our own interpretation of how these topics would help the students in later studies. In general, it appears from Tables 4.22 and 4.23 that FHFSA not only provides students with more RT topics than the EFSA but it also includes more topics that the students might come across later in their university studies such as *Technology*, *Health*, *Study & Learning*, and *Money and Shopping*. The most important point is that FHFSA deals with these topics from an international perspective in a way that would also apply to majors such as medicine and engineering at university. For example, under Health, which is represented in both series, the RTs in FHFSA mainly discuss issues that are related to diseases in general and how to protect oneself. In contrast, the RTs in EFSA are more concerned with the Saudi context and, where they discuss topics that learners may encounter in future study such as *Environment*, *Health*, and *Study & Learning*, they do so from the Saudi perspective. For example, under the Health topic, the RTs may talk about the Ministry of Health, and under the Study and Learning topic, you find the RTs discuss, for example, Saudi universities rather than other issues that might broaden the students' thinking to other issues in the world.

It should be said that these topics are presented in both books in generalist terms, as these textbooks are written for English learners, not for specialists. However, the students may learn some general ideas, as well as language, that relate to the fields of knowledge covered. For example, in the RTs about Health, the students may learn something about certain diseases as well as names of diseases such as *Flu*, and the same with the equipment used in this field such as the *microscope*, and the people who work in this field such as *dentist*, *doctor*, and *nurse*.

From the above, we could say that none of the English series meet all the three Ministry objectives mentioned above. However, we may say that EFSA is better in terms of the first and the second objectives mentioned above and FHFSA may be better in matching the third objective.

Table 4.24 summaries the topics of the RTs in the preparatory year reading. At this level the students study the Top Notch series from the fundamental level to the third level. Each textbook contains a number of units, and each unit covers one topic such as Living with computers; therefore, all the RTs in each unit concern one topic. Table 4.24 shows that during the preparatory level, the students are exposed to fourteen different topics.

Table 4.24: The topics of the preparatory level reading texts grouped under their main themes

Transportations Cars and driving Taking transportations Directions and transportations	Technology Living with computers Inventions and technology Coping with technology Getting Acquainted	Health Eating well Health matters Appearance and health Personal care and appearance Psychology and personality Staying in shape	Personal experiences Events and times Activities Past events Life choices Past, present, future plans
Holiday and travelling Enjoy the world Holiday and traditions Staying in a hotel Going out	Learning Books and magazines Enjoying the arts Books and reading	Culture Greeting and small talk Ethics and values Cultural literacy Abilities and requests	Families and relations People Names and Occupations Relationships Talking about families
Weather Disaster and emergencies Weather and ongoing activities	Work and daily activates Home and work Getting things done	Clothing Clothes Finding something to wear	Food Eating in, eating out Food
Politics Controversial issues	Shopping Shopping smart		

By comparing the topics of the reading texts at the secondary level and the preparatory level, we can see that the RTs at the two educational levels (secondary and preparatory levels) have considerable similarity in specific topics, as can be seen from the fact that topics such as food, health, holiday, shopping, and personal experiences are common to both education levels. These topics are in fact very common in EGP textbooks at school. However, in the case of the tertiary level, there are two main views on what topics are relevant (see 2.6.4). Some experts (e.g. Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Spack, 1988; Widdowson, 1983) favour using “general interest materials” which include general topics, such as global warming (Weather), compatible with an

EGP or EGAP course, while others (e.g. Hyland, 2002; Hyland and Tse, 2007) favour “discipline-specific materials” which contain topics from a specific field, such as medicine, and would be in effect ESAP. For the case of the NBU, it appears that general-interest materials are used, in what we have already identified (see 4.2 and 4.3) as an EGP course.

With regard to the differences between the two levels in terms of the topics, first, it may be noted that the RTs at the secondary level were more related to the students’ background since there were some RTs about the Saudi context in both English series. None of the preparatory level texts address one main culture, however. This might be because all the secondary level English series are designed and prepared under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, while for the preparatory year, the university selected an existing international commercial English series, *Top Notch*.

Second, The FHFSA covers slightly more reading topics and sub-topics (15 topics, and 46 sub-topics: see Tables 4.20 and 4.22) than the preparatory year, which covers 14 main topics and 41 sub-topics, while EFSA covers far fewer. One might have expected more at preparatory level, given that the teaching hours there are more than the teaching hours at secondary level - about 400 hours versus 288 hours, respectively.

Regarding how well the RTs at the preparatory level achieve the aims of teaching English at this level, it appears that the topics are general topics that are not closely related to the students’ disciplines that they going to take up in the following year. Therefore, it is not clear that the RTs at this level would help to minimize the gap between the secondary level and the FYU level. The topics that students encounter at this level may not be enough to provide the students with background knowledge that will really help them in the reading that they may encounter in their

disciplines at the FYU level. Hence learning of discipline specific content knowledge is left entirely to the first year. In contrast with the reading at lower levels, reading in first year medicine and engineering is all related to their subjects and students need to read specialist textbooks that are written for English native speakers. The English and translation department, however, still exposes students to RTs that cover general topics similar to those in the preparatory year. Therefore, it is highly expected that students in the English and translation department will face the least difficulties in terms of reading topics. Table 4.25 shows some examples of the topics in the FYU reading in the three disciplines.

Table 4.25: Examples of the topics at the FYU level in the three different disciplines

English & translation	Engineering	Medicine
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic life around the world 2. Experiencing nature 3. Living to eat, or eat to live? 4. In the community 5. Home 6. Cultures of the world 7. Health 8. Social life 9. Entertainment and the media 10. Sports 11. Education and student 12. City 13. Business and Money 14. Jobs and professions 15. Lifestyle around the world 16. Global connections 17. Language and communications 18. Tastes and preferences 19. New frontiers 20. Ceremonies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Force Systems 2. Equilibrium 3. Friction 4. Analysis and Design of Beams for bending 5. Deflection of Beams 6. Foundation of Engineering Economy 7. Energy and the first law of thermodynamics 8. Air standard cycles 9. Solidification and dispersion strengthening 10. Mechanical testing and properties 11. Atomic Arrangement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protein Structure and Function 2. Embryology: Molecular regulation and signalling 3. Gametogenesis 4. Implantation 5. Epithelial Tissue 6. Birth Defects and Prenatal Diagnosis

Although the reasons behind the selection of the reading topics in the preparatory year are not the focus of the study, it might be more beneficial if the English programme in the preparatory year was more focused and related to the students' potential disciplines following Hyland (2002), who argues that teaching English to prepare students for the tertiary level should be characterised by "specificity" (p. 385) and "must go as far as possible in the students' disciplines" (p. 394).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter described and interpreted the findings of the analysis of RTs at three educational levels according to the comparison criteria of the first research question of the current study.

The findings covered both general and academic vocabulary, scores on readability indices, mean word and sentence length, academic syntactic features, and topics. They concerned not only the extent to which a smooth pattern of graded progression over levels could be detected on each measure, whereby reading at each level would prepare for the next, but also how far the results matched absolute target values where they existed, either in the research literature or as goals stated by the institutional context, and the extent of the implied learning burden at different levels where texts at previous levels have not sufficiently prepared students for that level. The results for all features analysed reveal a remarkably similar picture. The English and translation first year RTs everywhere differ from first year medicine and engineering RTs in being closer to preparatory, or even secondary (esp. FHFS) RTs, due to the topics in that year not belonging to true academic reading for English language or literature as a subject, but being a continuation of general English reading for skill improvement. Hence students are reasonably well prepared by earlier levels to comprehend these texts without too much difficulty. Medicine and

engineering texts emerge as the most challenging to understand on all measures: both have texts with very demanding specialist topic content, and while medicine emerges as the more difficult in terms of general and specialist vocabulary, word length and difficult readability, engineering is more demanding in general academic vocabulary, academic syntactic features, and sentence length.

The preparatory year reading emerges in all respects as a poor bridge between secondary reading and true academic first year reading, being well below medicine and engineering and often even below the secondary (esp. FHfSA) RTs in lexical and grammatical demand and general readability, and not covering topics close to students' future specialisms. Almost everywhere FHfSA, even with discounting its greater size, is further down the road to being a preparation for genuine academic FYU reading than either EFSA or the preparatory year reading, and is thus more demanding for secondary school students to understand. Hence, arguably, a sequence of EFSA at secondary level, FHfSA at preparatory level, then first year would be a better progression than the current sequence, although really a completely new textbook is needed for the preparatory level.

Potential absolute targets such as exposure to 5000 word families, or to the entire 570 AWL, and achievement of 95% lexical coverage of texts by vocabulary which already occurred, or of suitable percentage of AWL tokens, are not achieved even by the end of the preparatory year. First year medicine and engineering reading involves exposure to more unfamiliar vocabulary, academic structures and topics after preparatory year reading which, by contrast, many students might find unchallenging, provided they have learnt successfully from secondary school reading.

In the next chapter, we turn to teacher and student perceptions of the progression we have uncovered.

5 Chapter Five: Perceived preparedness for the next educational level, and readiness for the current educational level

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results related to four research questions (see 1.8) on students' and teachers' perspectives regarding the suitability of the reading texts (RTs) at the secondary level for preparing the students for the RTs at the preparatory level and the suitability of the RTs at the preparatory level in preparing the students for the reading at the FYU level.

This chapter discusses the findings under two main sections. The first main section shows whether the students feel prepared for the reading demands of the preparatory level or not. This has two main subsections: the first subsection presents the secondary students' and their teachers' forward-looking perspectives regarding this issue; the next subsection reports the preparatory students' and their English teachers' retrospective views.

The second main section focuses on the how well the RTs at the preparatory level are perceived in preparing the students to meet the reading in their disciplines at FYU level. This section is also divided into two main subsections: the first subsection gives the preparatory level students' and their teachers' forward-looking perspectives regarding how well the preparatory students will be prepared for their first year at university; the second subsection discusses the FYU students' and their teachers' retrospective views in three different disciplines (English and translation, medicine, and engineering) regarding the students' readiness for the reading demands in the first university year.

5.2 Preparedness for reading at the preparatory level

5.2.1 Secondary students and their teachers' perspectives

RQ2: To what extent do Saudi secondary level students and their English teachers think that the reading texts in the secondary English textbooks, EFSA, will prepare them for reading at the preparatory level? Why (not)?

Before presenting the students' and the teachers' opinions, it is worth mentioning that the majority of the teachers and students (if not all) were not fully aware of the nature of the reading at the preparatory level, but understandably perceived it as more advanced, as is clearly shown by the students and their teachers in interview responses. For example:

the students may encounter more advanced reading texts at the preparatory level to prepare them more for what they will read during FYU study (**Sec. T4**)

...we will meet reading texts [at the preparatory level] that might be so complicated and [they might be] at a higher level than the reading texts that we read at this level [secondary level] (**Sec. S2**)

The results revealed that there was a convergence between the views of the teachers and students that the RTs at the secondary level are not likely to be very helpful in preparing the students for the possible reading demands at the preparatory level. For example:

The reading texts at the secondary level are not enough to prepare the students, not just to reach the next educational level but even for anything else. (**Sec.T1**)

Of course to provide some help, you know something is better than nothing, but when talking about preparing the students for preparatory level, which should be more advanced reading, I will say not very helpful. (**Sec.T3**)

They are not as helpful as they should be (**Sec.S4**)

These findings are consistent with Freahat's (2014) study, which found that, in the Jordanian context, many English secondary teachers believed that the RTs in the secondary textbooks are not appropriate for preparing the students for university academic reading, and there was a consensus among secondary level English teachers that students might experience huge difficulties in dealing with university reading whether in the EFL course or in their subjects.

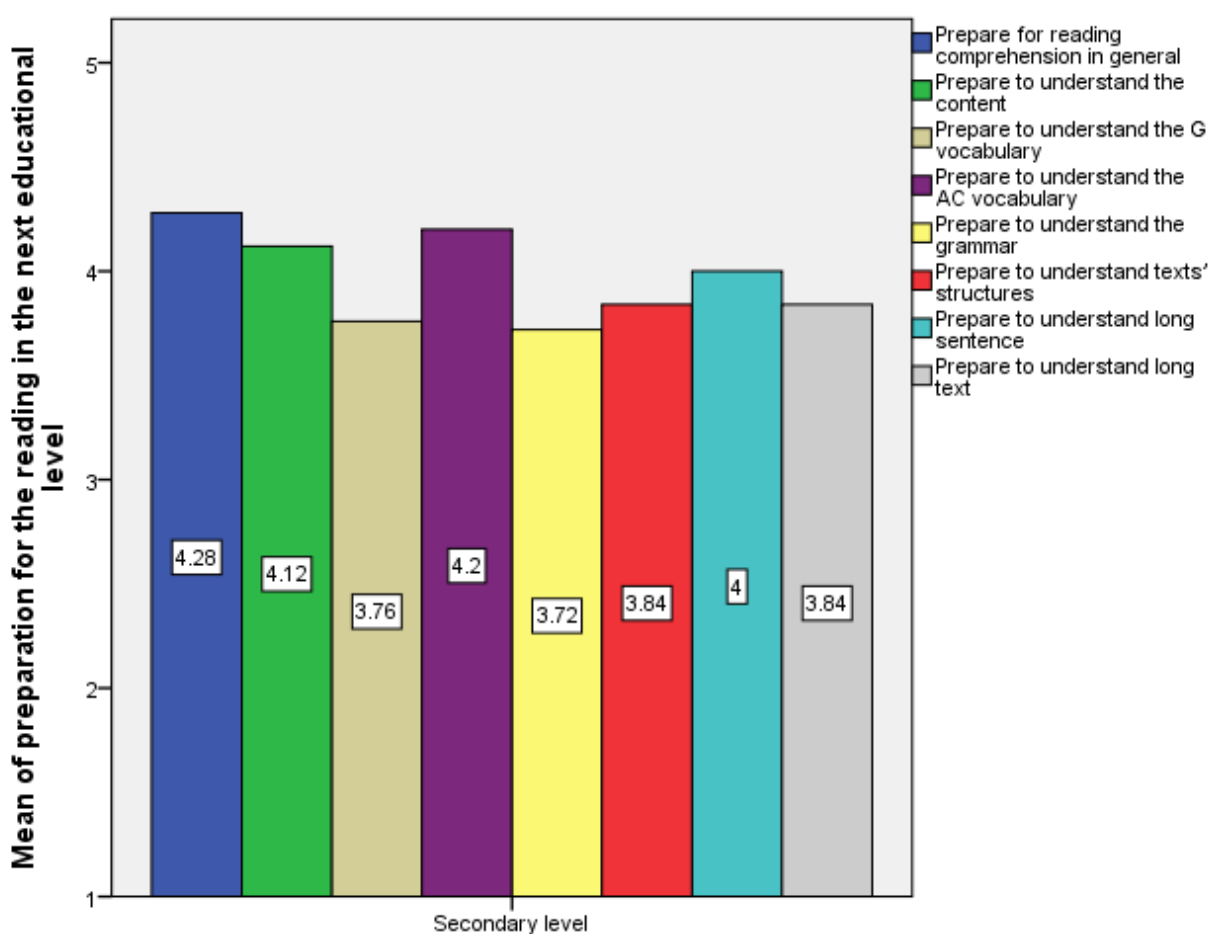


Figure 5.1: The secondary students' opinions about how well the reading texts in the secondary level will prepare them for the preparatory level reading (High score means less prepared).

Figure 5.1 shows from the questionnaire that the secondary level students believed that the RTs are not helpful to prepare them for the next education level: they gave a rating of 4.28 on

average on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 indicates 'not helpful at all'. These results show that the students' perspectives were consistent with their teachers' ones.

The students perceived that their RTs were least helpful in developing their academic vocabulary, increasing their ability to deal with long sentences, and exposing them to topics that they may encounter at the next level of reading, as can be seen clearly in Figure 5.1.

These results do not always agree with what was found after analysing the RTs at both educational levels (secondary and preparatory). With regard to academic vocabulary, it was found in the RTs analysis that the percentages and the amounts of the academic vocabulary (in tokens) in the RTs at secondary level (EFSA) (508 tokens / 2.05%) were quite close to what was found at the preparatory level (574 tokens / 2.4%) (see 4.3.2). In addition, the percentages of academic vocabulary in the RTs at both levels were far below the percentages of academic vocabulary which may be found in authentic academic texts (8% - 10%) as suggested by Coxhead and Nation (2001); instead, they were closer to the percentages found in non-academic texts such as novels (2%) and newspapers (4%). Furthermore, the results of the text analysis (see 4.3.3) showed that 44% of the academic word families found in the RTs at the preparatory level also appeared in the RTs in EFSA at the secondary level, which means that 56% of the academic word families found in the RTs at the preparatory level may be considered unfamiliar word families: this accounts for 114 word families (209 word types). All in all, these differences in the amount of academic vocabulary between the two educational levels may not in fact constitute a huge gap especially if we take into consideration that students at the preparatory level are enrolled in a one academic year English programme that provides 112 more teaching hours than they had experienced during the entire three years at secondary level.

With regard to the average sentence length, the text analysis results (see 4.4.2) showed that the sentence length, on average, in the RTs in EFSA was longer than the average sentence length in the RTs at the preparatory level. This shows again that the results of the text analysis in terms of the sentence length disagree with the secondary students' perspectives.

Going back to Figure 5.1, although the students considered that the English texts at the secondary level were slightly more helpful in preparing them for the reading at the next education level in terms of general vocabulary, grammar, academic syntactic features, and dealing with a long text, they still rated them on average between 3.72 and 3.8, which is above the midpoint on the scale of 1 to 5, so not helpful.

By comparing the students' perspectives with the results of the text analysis in Chapter four, it can be noted again that this disagrees with the students' perspectives as the RTs at the secondary level in EFSA are in fact quite similar to the RTs at the preparatory level. In terms of the selected academic syntactic features, the occurrences of most selected syntactic features in EFSA are slightly higher than the occurrences of these features in the RTs at the preparatory level (see 4.5.1). In addition, the results of the text analysis (see 4.2.1) showed that the distribution of word tokens of the RTs at the preparatory level in terms of BNC word family frequency lists was quite similar to the word token profile of the RTs at the secondary level, which again disagreed with what most of what the students thought. On the other hand, the RT analysis did show a huge gap between the length of the RTs, on average, between the two educational levels, but this difference was not as the students' and their teachers expected but rather the reverse, since the RTs at the preparatory level were far shorter than the RTs at the secondary level in EFSA (see 4.2.1).

Both students and their teachers provided several reasons for the perceived failure of the EFSA RTs (Figure 5.2) in preparing them for the next education level, which is all consistent with the results shown in Figure 5.1 above.

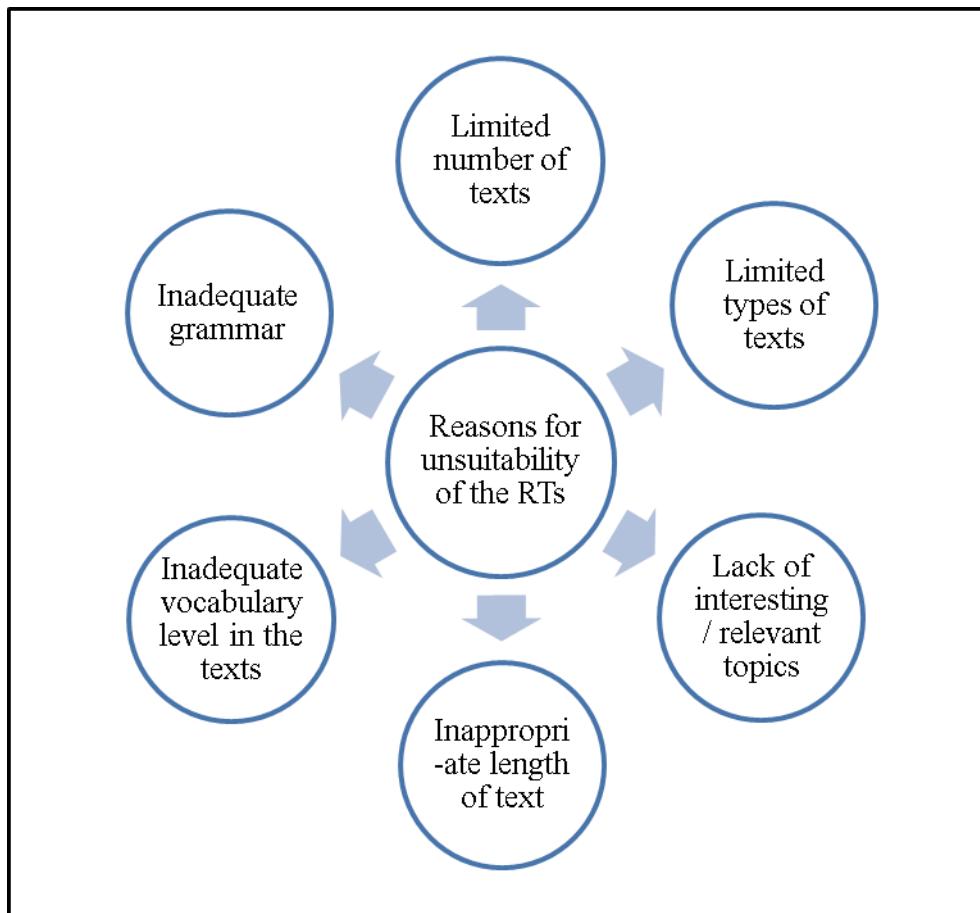


Figure 5.2: The perceived reasons for the reading texts not being helpful in preparing for the next educational level.

5.2.1.1 Limited number of texts

The majority of the teachers and students reported that the limited number of RTs is one of the main factors that may lead to the under-preparedness of the students. For example:

The students study fewer than 70 texts during the three years at the secondary stage. Regardless of the content, do you think this is enough to improve the students' reading

ability in order to study in an English-medium programme? Definitely not, as I can see in our students. **(Sec.T2)**

We only depend on the textbooks, and the number of reading texts in these textbooks is limited; there is only about one reading text in each unit. **(Sec.S1)**

Although in the literature there is no optimal number of RTs that students need to be exposed to each year, all researchers and educators believe that the more the students read, the more their reading ability is improved (e.g. Grabe, 2009). Indeed, the RT analysis (see 4.2.1) showed that the number of RTs in EFSA (64 texts, 24224 tokens) was quite small, though there were far more in the newer English series, FHFS (191 texts, 50416 tokens) (see 1.4.2).

This limited number of RTs may result from the design of the EFSA textbooks, as in each year one or two skills were paid more attention to than others. For example, in year one more attention was paid to speaking and listening, in year two more focus was on reading, while the writing skill was stressed most in year three (see 1.4.2.1).

5.2.1.2 Limited types of texts

All the teachers reported that the textbooks do not provide a variety of types of texts that would help the students to expand their knowledge and train them to read a different range of texts. For example:

The types of the text in the textbook are not sufficient. If you look at the reading texts in the textbooks [EFSA], you can find that most of the reading texts are either conversations or stories. The students may not be exposed to different types of texts, such as expository texts, descriptive and others which are more academic texts, but in the secondary level there are no academic texts. Thus, I think the students will face difficulties if they encounter these types of texts. **(Sec.T2)**

Knowledge of different types of texts provides the students with a roadmap that helps them to locate the needed information which is also called a “formal schema” (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). According to Grabe and Stoller (2011), the awareness of text structures in L2 is necessary for reading comprehension. Understanding the text structure helps to reduce the cognitive load during reading, and enables learners to concentrate on other elements of the text, such as the meaning of the words.

In addition, most of the teachers also mentioned that the RTs at secondary level do not include academic register as is shown in the above quotation. As we explained earlier in Chapter two (see 2.5), although it might not be expected that the secondary level students would be exposed to fully academic texts, still, the students might be expected to be exposed to texts with expository and argumentative structures, similar to what is found in academic texts (Evans, Anderson & Eggington, 2015; Duke, 2004; Hall & Sabey, 2007).

Although in our textbook analyses we did not investigate the types of texts, the researcher, through casual inspection of EFSA, agrees that there is not much variation in types of texts, and that they are indeed mostly dialogues or narratives. The students and their teachers are correct in that EFSA has little variety in types of texts, but, in fact, at the preparatory level the types they will meet are not very much more varied than those at secondary level. In *Top Notch* most of the texts are quite similar to EFSA in that they are again mostly dialogues and stories.

5.2.1.3 Lack of interesting/ relevant topics

All the interviewed students reported that the uninteresting nature of the topics affected their reading effort and motivation; hence they did not bother to read in depth, so they would not learn so much, which would affect their preparation for the next reading level. For example:

The reading texts that we study are boring and not interesting, so we read them just for reading and to answer the questions and pass the exams. **(Sec.S1)**

Other students shared that opinion, adding that the RTs at the secondary level are limited in their topics. Most of the students reported, either in the questionnaire or the interview, that most of the RTs in EFSA are about the Saudi or Islamic context, indeed as we confirmed in the previous chapter (see 4.6), and they perceived that other important topics, such as those that are related to technology, are neglected. For example:

Most of the topics are about Saudi Arabia; we should read other interesting topics such as technology, computers, etc. These topics could help me in future when I will study in the field of computing. **(Sec.S4)**

We learn from the literature that interest in reading topics is important: Edgier (1999) views topic interest as a powerful psychological motivator in learning. It is also believed that RTs are more appropriate for the students if they are related to the students' background. In our case with EFSA, it seems that the gain from heavily exposing the students to RTs that are closely related to their culture and background was outweighed by the boredom!

This would support the view that although the students often used the word interesting, it is clear that often they were really referring to relevance as is clearly shown in above quotation. In this study, most of the students showed that interest and relevance (to what they were going to study

in future) were among the key features that they considered to be affecting their reading preparedness. Dependence on textbooks which include limited reading topics, as shown both by the students' opinion here and the RTs analysis in Chapter four (see 4.6), make the students bored and unenthusiastic about reading in English and they only read the minimum of their textbooks for the purpose of passing the exams, as was always declared by the students and their teachers in the interviews.

This idea supports other researchers' views that the textbooks should serve what the students' needs (e.g. Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Jordan, 1997; Richard, 2013).

5.2.1.4 Inappropriate length of texts

One teacher commented on the length of text that students are exposed to during their study at secondary level. He argued that the length of the RTs in the textbooks is short compared with the reading demands that may be placed on students at university level, and maybe at the preparatory level as well. He said:

If you look at the reading texts in the secondary level, you can find that the average length of the reading texts may be 200 words and may be higher in Year Two. This may have a negative impact on the development of students' reading ability; students in the university may be required to read thousands of words every day and this may apply to the preparatory year [this is not true in reality], and they may not be able to do that. **(Sec. T3)**

The teacher in the above extract meant that more exposure to long texts at secondary level would help improve students' reading ability in dealing with long texts at the next education level. Nevertheless, long texts are not necessarily more difficult to comprehend than short texts; in long texts, there is more space for long sentences and complex structures which may be similar to the language that students will encounter when they read academic texts. As we

discussed in the literature review (see 2.6.6), some studies found that there is no relation between text length and reading comprehension in the EFL context (e.g., Mehrpour and Riazi, 2004; Jalilehvand, 2012). These studies investigated the effect of the text's length on reading comprehension among university students (same level), by providing them with an original version that included more details and a shortened version that was summarized by the researcher.

The teachers' belief that at the preparatory level the students should be exposed to longer texts is quite similar to what their students also believe, as was shown earlier in this chapter. However, it is not in fact true that the RTs at the preparatory level are far shorter than the RTs at the secondary level (see 4.2.1). These views are in line with other researchers' claim that the length of the texts may affect the readers' reading comprehension (e.g. Alderson, 2000; Andreassen and Bråten, 2009; Baddeley, 2000).

5.2.1.5 Inadequate vocabulary level in the texts

Most of the secondary level teachers considered the simple and limited vocabulary that is used in the RTs in the EFSA textbooks as one of the reasons that affect the students' preparedness for reading in academic contexts at the next educational level. One teacher maintained that

The vocabulary is limited and simple. It is true many students found it difficult. But look at the vocabulary in the reading texts, you find very common and limited vocabulary. Another important thing about the vocabulary is that you know students need to learn academic vocabulary, not only general vocabulary. This is not much focused on by the reading texts. Students need to be ready for all these types of vocabulary. **(Sec.T3)**

The above quotation shows that the low level of vocabulary of the RTs in the secondary textbooks (EFSA) is perceived as one of the reasons for the lack of students' preparedness.

Indeed, what the teacher stated above is in line with the RT analysis when it is assessed in the light of the literature (see 4.2.1): the RTs in EFSA contain only 1818 word families, which correspond to 3470 word types; 87.74% lie in the first and second frequency bands of the BNC, 6.1% in proper nouns and abbreviations and the remaining 6.1% in the other bands. Thus, most of the vocabulary lies in the first two bands, and this is far below the 5000-word-family vocabulary threshold for minimum reading comprehension (based on 95% coverage) that students need to achieve to be almost prepared for academic texts (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010). However, based on the results of the analysis of the RTs at both levels, the vocabulary profile of the RTs in EFSA at the secondary level is quite similar to the vocabulary profile of the RTs at the preparatory level (see table 4.2). Furthermore, the expected unfamiliar words that may encounter the students in the reading at the preparatory level is 3.725 word types (2.25 word families), which is in the range of the number of new words that EFL students could do (see 2.6.1.4), which suggests that the RTs at the preparatory level may not be too demanding as the secondary level teachers and students think.

Regarding academic vocabulary, the teachers also reported that this type of vocabulary is not given attention in the RTs. For example:

The reading texts also do not pay attention to academic words that are very important for the students at the university. **(Sec.T2)**

What was reported at the above quotation is consistent with the RT analysis (see 4.3.2), which shows that the RTs in EFSA represent only 7.3% of the academic word families and 5.3% of the word types in the academic word list (Coxhead, 2000). However, what is also found is that the RTs at the preparatory level do not contain much academic vocabulary, as it is only slightly higher than EFSA on 2.4% of the running words, which is quite similar to the percentage of the

academic vocabulary at the secondary stage (2.05%). However, the students may encounter around 209 academic word types (114 academic word families) that are more likely to be unfamiliar to them (see 4.3.3).

5.2.1.6 Inadequate grammar

Some teachers also felt that the students needed to be exposed to RTs that contain more academic and complicated grammar, in order to be well prepared for the academic reading which they imagined the students would meet at the preparatory level. For example:

Look at the grammar in the texts: you will find most of the sentences are simple and not like academic texts, where you find complex structures. Students need to be exposed to this language and structures in order to prepare them... not to be taught simple texts then asked to read more complicated texts. (Sec.T1)

In the analysis of academic syntactic features in the RTs at the three educational levels, although there were in fact again no huge differences in the RTs between the preparatory level and the secondary level in terms of academic syntactic features, clear differences were shown between the RTs at the secondary level (EFSA) and the FYU level. This may affect the students' preparedness for academic reading at the university level as we saw in the literature (see 2.6.2.) that syntactic awareness has a significant role in L2 reading comprehension of a text (Anderson, 2000; Grabe, 2009, 2005; Koda, 2005; Nagy & Scott, 2000).

5.2.2 Preparatory students' and their teachers' perspectives

RQ3: To what extent do Saudi preparatory year students and their English teachers think that reading texts in EFSA secondary English textbooks have prepared the students for their reading at the preparatory level? Why (not)?

This section covers whether the preparatory level students and their teachers think, looking back, that they were prepared for the reading at this level or not. Hence, this section will present the reality of how the preparatory students and their English teachers perceived the students' readiness for the reading demands at the preparatory level, compared with the secondary level predictions reviewed above (5.2.1).

Due to the lack of the teachers' knowledge about the RTs at the secondary level, the teachers talked about the consequences of studying the RTs at the secondary level as they saw it from their students' current performance. The teachers in fact believed that students came to the preparatory level with poor English proficiency and reading skills; they also believed that students should be able to cope with more demanding texts than they were exposed to at the time of the study. For example:

The students at this level [preparatory] should be able to read and deal with more advanced reading texts, not only with these texts they are reading now. **(Prep. T3)**

Nevertheless, when I asked them whether the students could manage the RTs that are assigned for them at the preparatory level, all the teachers said that the RTs match the students' level, so they could understand them. For example:

The reading texts at this level [preparatory] match the students' reading level, so I think they can deal with their reading texts in the right way. **(Prep. T2)**

From the above we could say that the teachers were not satisfied with their students' reading ability in general. However, due to the relatively undemanding nature of the RTs at the preparatory level, they found the students at this level able to manage the RTs that they were required to read. This result implies that the English teachers at the preparatory level were not

happy about the level of the RTs at the preparatory level, which seem to be selected based on the incoming students' English level, without any regard to the aims of teaching English at this level (see 1.5.1) or students' reading needs in the ensuing first university year. It is worth mentioning that the English textbooks that are used at the preparatory level are selected by the Deanship of the Preparatory Year in the NBU, not the teachers, and it is not really clear what the process of textbook selection is or what the criteria used are.

Regarding the students' views, the majority of the students found that the RTs at the secondary level did develop their reading ability enough to enable them to understand the RTs at the preparatory level, as shown in Figure 5.3. Here the students' response to the item asking how well overall the RTs have prepared them to understand the RTs at the preparatory level was, on average, 2.28 on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is 'not helpful'.

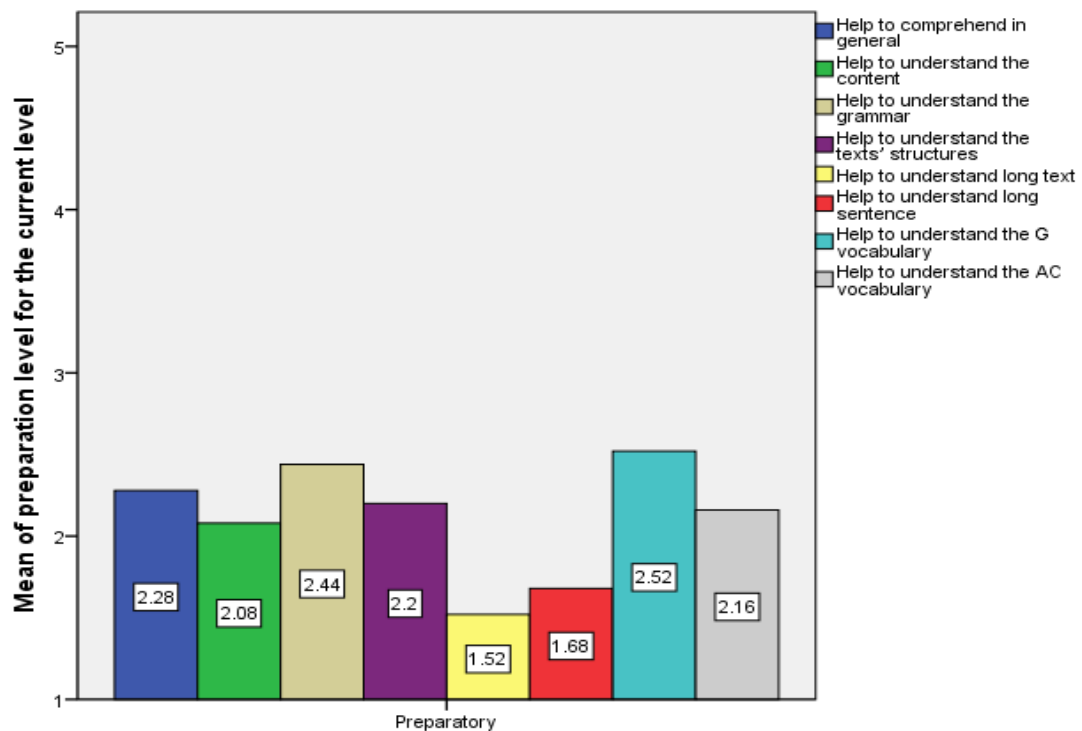


Figure 5.3: The preparatory students' opinion about how well the reading texts in the secondary level prepared them for the preparatory reading level (High score means less prepared and helpful).

Regarding the other aspects that may cause difficulties in reading a text, as shown in Figure 5.3, the average rating for all these aspects ranged from 1.5 to 2.5, which means that the majority of the students saw that the RTs in the secondary level had helped them to understand all aspects of the RTs which they encountered at the preparatory level. This largely agrees with what we learnt from comparing the actual texts (Sections 4.2, 4.3,4.4; see further below) but disagrees with what the secondary level teachers and students predicted (5.2.1) due to their lack of knowledge of what the preparatory level textbook was really like.

In detail, topics are rated on average 2 out of 5, indicating a perception that secondary level topics are a good preparation. In this instance it cannot be due to the similarity between the topics of the RTs between the two levels, since EFSA covers many Saudi topics while the Prep textbook contains non-Saudi international topics. However, all the topics at the two educational levels are considered general topics, not specialised ones (see 4.6). In addition, the students are possibly thinking of other aspects such as the text types and length rather than the topics in the narrow sense.

With respect to text length, where EFSA is rated as providing the best preparation (average rating of 1.5 out of 5 where 5 means less helpful), the result is consistent with the RT analysis, which shows that the length of RTs at the preparatory level is on average far shorter than the RTs in EFSA (see 4.2.1).

Figure 5.3 shows, however, that students reported that the RTs at the secondary level provided the least preparation in the areas of general vocabulary and the grammar that they encountered in their reading at the preparatory level, although these were still rated helpful in terms of the scale (on average, 2.5 for the vocabulary and 2.4 for the grammar). The possible explanation for

this is that the students maybe encountered difficulties in vocabulary that was only found at the preparatory level, which our text analysis (see 4.2.4.; 4.3.3) shows to comprise 900 word families (1490 word types), 19.5% of all tokens in the RTs at the preparatory level (including the off-list), and 209 academic word types (114 word families) that may be unfamiliar to the students.

Regarding grammar, the students' views were inconsistent with the RT analysis (see 4.4), where the RTs at the preparatory level are less demanding than those at the secondary level, as shown in the readability analysis, and the analysis of several of the selected academic syntactic features (see 4.5).

Overall, the findings of the student interviews regarding preparedness for the preparatory level reading revealed that the main reason which helped the majority of students to manage the reading at the preparatory level was the low level of the RTs at the preparatory level rather than the efficiency of the RTs at the secondary level. For example:

Honestly, I do not think I got much benefit from the reading lessons at secondary level. The best thing is we started from the beginning. The reading texts at the preparatory level were easier and shorter than at the secondary one. **(Prep. S4)**

This finding is in line with the results of the RT analysis (see chapter four) which found that the RTs at the preparatory level were easier and less demanding than those at the secondary level. Another reason might be the time allocated for teaching English at the preparatory level which is 112 hours more than the time allocated for teaching English in all the three year of the secondary level.

This finding of the current study is consistent with Freahat's (2014) study, which found in a different context (Jordan) that the majority of the students found the RTs at the secondary level fairly suitable in preparing them for the EFL University textbook which is almost equivalent to the preparatory level textbooks in our study.

5.3 The students' preparedness for the first year university reading

5.3.1 The preparatory students' and teachers' view

RQ4: To what extent do Saudi preparatory year students and their English teachers think that the reading texts at the preparatory level will prepare students for the reading in their FYU level? Why (not)?

This section presents the preparatory level students' and their teachers' perceptions regarding the efficiency of the RTs at the preparatory level in preparing the students for the FYU level in different disciplines.

The results show agreement between the preparatory level teachers and their students that the RTs at the preparatory level are not sufficient for preparing the students to meet the reading demands that may be placed on them in the first university year in their disciplines.

Regarding the teachers' views, all the teachers thought that the RTs that students are exposed to during the preparatory level are mainly to help the students to improve their general English communication for everyday use but the RTs are not adequate to prepare the students for the their FYU academic reading. For example:

I can see that the reading texts at the preparatory level are more related to general English that will help the students to improve their general English and basically their communication skills speaking and listening but not for helping them to deal with their reading texts in the first year [of the university level]. (**Prep. T2**)

All the teachers also reported that the students' English level is too weak, so EAP and ESP RTs would be too hard for them to deal with. For example:

Do you expect the new born baby to run before crawling? [what do you think?] the child needs to crawl, then you can train them to walk and run. This is like the students, we need to teach them the basics, and if they acquired the basics, we can teach them the more advanced language such as ESP. (**Prep. T1**)

In the above quotation, the teachers were referring to potentially teaching ESP at the preparatory level but at the moment that does not happen despite the course being called EAP. The textbooks used at the preparatory level are more general English, as is reported by the Prep. T2 in the above quotation, rather than being EAP. However, the teachers' view has been rejected by Hyland (2002, p.388) who states:

weak students need to control core forms before getting on to specific, and presumably more difficult... [This argument is not] supported by research in second language acquisition. Students do not learn in this step-by-step fashion according to some externally imposed sequence. They acquire features of the language as they need them, rather than incrementally in the order that teachers present them. Students may need to attend more to sentence-level features at lower proficiencies, and perhaps require remedial attention in some areas, but there is no need to ignore either discourse or discipline at any stage. (2002, p.388)

Regarding the students' perceptions, almost all the students agreed with their teachers' views that RTs at the preparatory level are not helpful in developing their reading ability, as can be seen in Figure 5.4.

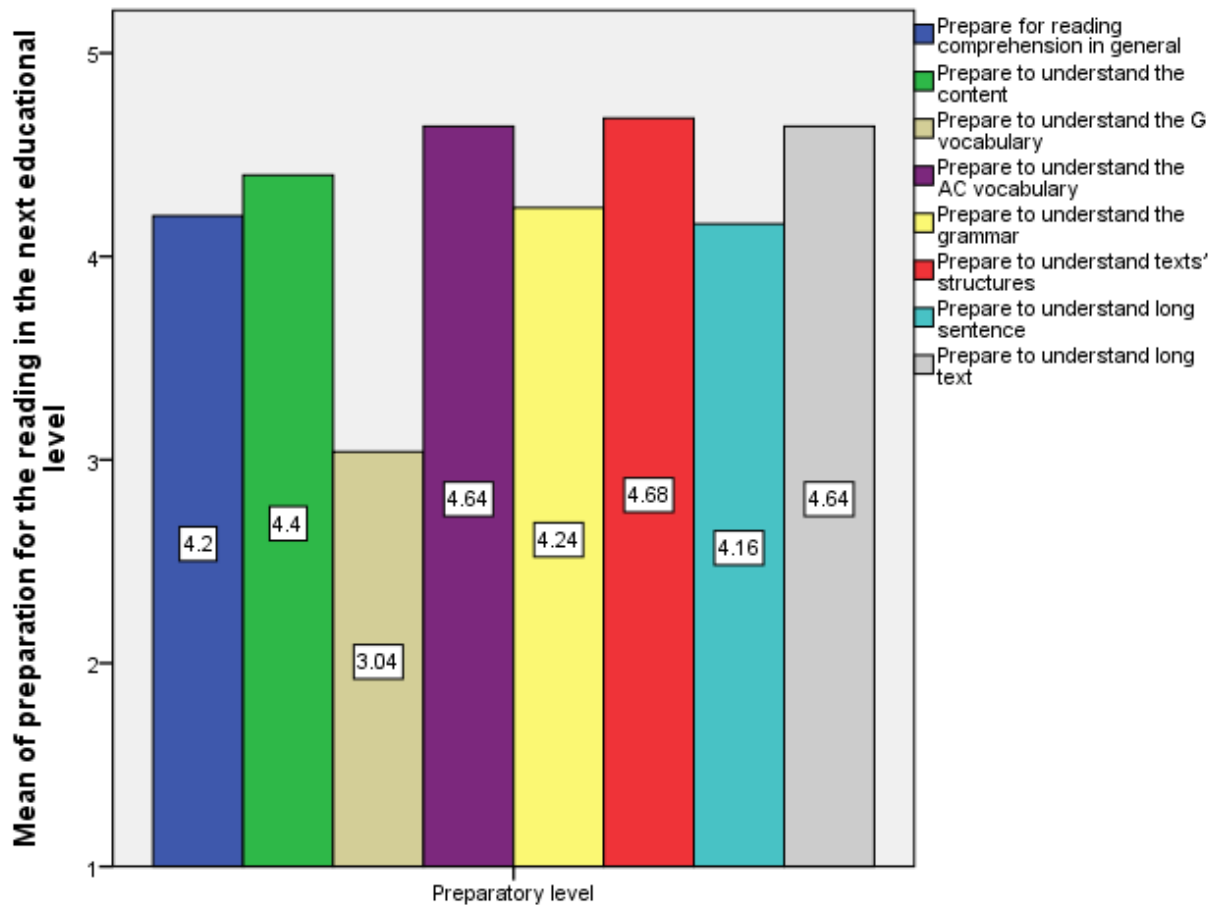


Figure 5.4: The preparatory students' opinions about how well the reading texts at the preparatory level will prepare them for the first year university reading (High score means less prepared and helpful).

It appears in Figure 5.4 that overall the students rated the RTs at the preparatory level as not helpful, with an average of 4.2 on a scale of 1 to 5 for help with overall comprehension, where 5 is not helpful at all.

With the exception of general vocabulary (rated at the midpoint), the students believe that what they are reading at the preparatory level will not prepare them to understand any of the features of texts they will meet: types of text (register), content, grammar, academic vocabulary, or the long sentences or long text (with average ratings between 4.4 and 4.6 out of 5, as shown in Figure 5.4). This view is consistent with the teachers view: as explained above, the RTs at the preparatory level focus more on general English for non-specialised communication rather than academic English.

By comparing the students' views regarding the above aspects with what was found in the RTs analysis (chapter four) the following points can be noted:

First, with regard to the types of texts, although in this study the types of texts were not systematically investigated, it can be said from the researcher's casual inspection of the RTs used at the preparatory level, and of the texts in our corpora for the three first year disciplines, that the students might be right regarding the medicine and engineering disciplines as they will encounter far more academic and specialized texts (expository, informative texts) there. However, in the English and translation department first year, most of the texts are quite similar to those at the preparatory level (stories) though they are longer.

Second, with regard to the content of the texts, the text analysis (See 4.6.3) showed that the topics in the medicine and engineering disciplines are specialised texts, whereas in the English and translation department, the topics are more general topics which are quite similar to what students are exposed to at the preparatory level. Thus, it could be said their students' views are consistent with the RT analysis in terms of the medicine and engineering fields.

Third, with regard to the academic syntactic features (grammar), the results of the text analysis showed that there are huge differences in the frequency of the selected academic features between the RTs in the preparatory year texts and those in the reading that the students encounter in the first year especially in engineering and medicine materials. However, it appears again that the preparatory RTs compare most favourably to the English and translation RTs with respect to the frequency of most of the academic syntactic features investigated. Thus, it can be seen that the students' views agreed with the text analysis in 4.5.1, especially with respect to the engineering and medicine disciplines.

Fourth, the students' views are in line with results of the RT analysis in terms of the text and sentence length (See 4.2.1, 4.4.2), as clear differences in these features were shown especially for the medicine and engineering disciplines.

Finally, with regard to academic vocabulary, the results of the text analysis agreed with the students' views as the percentage of the academic vocabulary (tokens) especially in the Med and Engn corpora is far higher than the percentage of academic vocabulary in the preparatory year texts (See 4.3.1).

Going back to figure 5.4, it appears that the preparation in terms of grammar and dealing with long sentences is seen as slightly less poor than that for the other features, on average 4.2 and 4.1 respectively. Finally, the students' average relatively much more favourable rating of how reading at the preparatory level may help them to understand the general vocabulary that they may encounter during their FYU reading (mean 3) is understandable given that our analysis (See 4.2.1, and 4.3.1.) shows that it is general rather than academic vocabulary that the preparatory textbook focuses on.

It is not surprising that some students expressed their worries about the problems that they may encounter in their first year of university reading.

I am really worried that in the foundation year we are exposed to easy English textbooks, and English reading texts, and we will face big problems when we study in the first year.
(Prep. S1)

A number of reasons emerged for the inadequacy of the preparatory year RTs in living up to their name and actually 'preparing' the students for the next educational level (the first year).

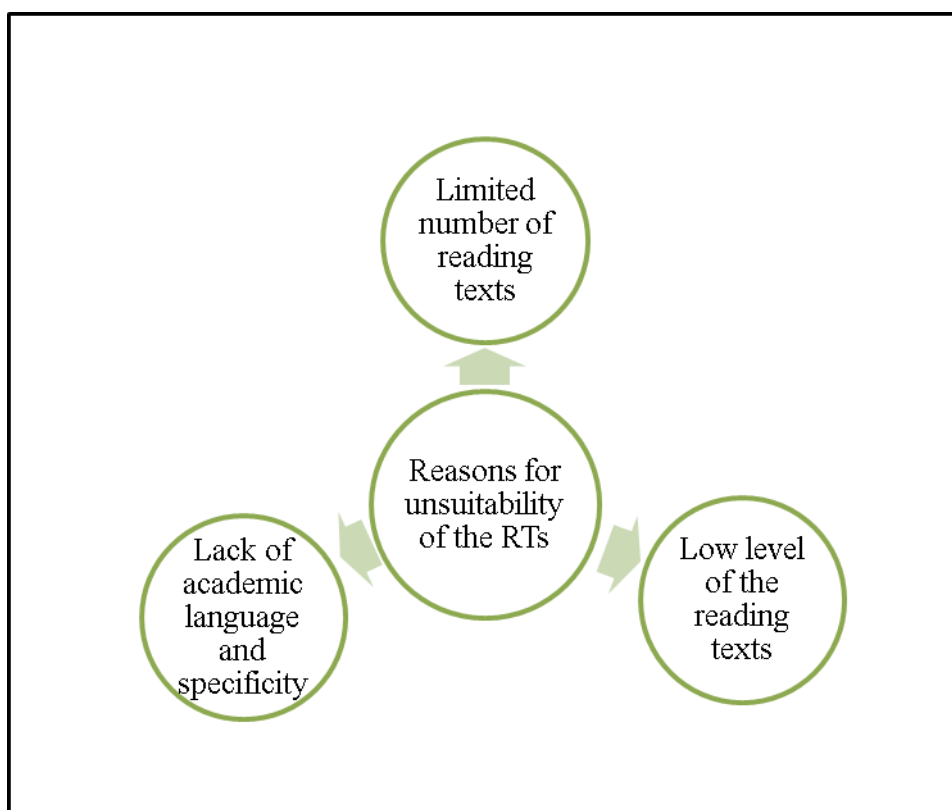


Figure 5.5: The perceived reasons for the preparatory year reading texts not being helpful in preparing for the next educational level.

5.3.1.1 The limited number of the reading texts

All of the teachers reported that there was a limited number of RTs in the students' preparatory textbooks that they were assigned to use by the university. This is because they quite correctly that see that the textbooks mainly focusing on oral communication skills (i.e., listening and speaking), rather than on reading and writing. For example:

We only use all the reading texts in these textbooks [means no reading texts are used apart from those in Top Notch textbooks]. We should make one important point which is that in these textbooks the focus is not on reading, but it is on listening and speaking which are communication skills (listening and speaking). This does not mean that the reading is neglected 100%...If we say that communication skills (listening and speaking) are considered 60 or 70%, the reading would be about 25 to 30%. **(Prep. T1)**

The students also shared their teachers' opinion that the RTs are limited and not enough to improve their reading ability to the required level. For example:

The textbooks contain few reading texts...as most of the reading texts are short and in dialogue style **(Prep. S2)**

Indeed, looking at the total number of words in texts in the preparatory level RT corpus we can note that there are 191 texts with an average length of only 126 words (Table 4.1). This reflects the fact that there are many short texts which are mostly in the form of dialogue rather than a true RT. However, the first year students will be required to read great amount of texts especially those who will study in the Engineering and Medicine Colleges. In fact, as seen in 4.2, the lowest number of RTs was found in the English and translation department first year which exposes students to only 48 texts, albeit they are far longer than those at the secondary or preparatory level. As noted before, the students in this department are studying further English language courses in the first year rather than specialised subject courses. It is worth mentioning

that similar reasons were also mentioned by the secondary level students and teachers when they commented on the RTs at the secondary level. Thus, this should alert the MoE, and NBU to evaluate the amount of RTs that students are exposed to during their English studies at the secondary and the preparatory level.

5.3.1.2 Low level of the reading texts

Another reason given was the low level of the RTs in a variety of ways, as was reported by many teachers and students. For example one referred to the length of the texts:

The reading texts are not as long as at the secondary stage. The majority of the texts are small texts, I do not think that we going to read texts as short as these at the FYU level. **(Prep. S4)**

Another referred more to the ease of the language in the texts:

The reading texts are very easy ...they are more for very beginner learners. **(Prep. T3)**

All the teachers and students mentioned that the vocabulary and grammar used in the RTs were basic, which ill-prepares the students for the academic RTs that they will encounter in their first year. For example:

The vocabulary and level of the sentences in the reading texts at this [preparatory] level are very simple, they would help the students to improve their general English reading, but I definitely think the students need to be exposed to more lower frequent vocabulary.... academic and academic vocabulary is almost ignored. **(Prep. T1)**

[The reading texts are not well suited to prepare me] because the reading texts are short, and written in a simple vocabulary and grammar. **(Prep. S3)**

The low level of the RTs results from that all students at the preparatory level in fact are required to start learning English from a beginner level, which is called Fundamental A in the Top Notch series.

By looking at the preparatory level aims, it can be found that one of its aims is to minimize the gap between the secondary level and university level (See 1.5.1). However, the actual English programme seems to be more like revision of what students have studied in the schools, as one student describes:

We started studying English from the beginning; we more or less studied again what we have studied at the intermediate stage, and secondary stage. **(Prep. S7)**

From the above we could say that may be the Deanship of the Preparatory Year seems to have failed in choosing the right textbooks, or designing materials that help in achieving an important goal of teaching English at this level.

These findings are in line with what was noted in the RT analysis - that the RTs at the preparatory level are the shortest and least demanding in terms of readability, vocabulary, and academic syntactic features among all three levels (see Chapter four).

5.3.1.3 Lack of academic language and specificity

As we explained earlier (See 2.3), there is a difference between being a text being academic and being related to a specific field, as the text might be general academic but not necessarily specialised in a particular discipline, and this was explained by many researchers in the field of teaching English when they differentiate between EGAP and ESAP. However, the reason for using this subtitle is that the participants in this study when they say academic texts are usually referring to specialised texts.

There is a convergence in the views of the teachers and students regarding the language of the RTs that are used at the preparatory level that the RTs are not academic or indeed specialised texts which the students at this level need to be exposed to so as to meet the language which they may encounter in their FYU textbooks. In the next quotation one student criticised the RTs by saying:

I know that my English was weak when I finished my secondary school, we studied general English and this is very helpful for us, but I think we should study something about academic language and related to what we are going to read and study next year [first university year]. **(Prep. S3)**

Some teachers also voiced that same opinion that the RTs are not emphasising academic reading. For example:

The students are going to read in their first year university study academic texts, and they contain special vocabulary or maybe grammar, depending on the fields. You ask me whether what they read in the preparatory year will prepare them for their first year, I think that answer is no, the texts what they read will help them but will not prepare them, the texts do not train the students to understand and deal with academic and specialised texts. So I think we cannot cut corn if there is not corn to cut. You know it is all general. **(Prep. T3)**

By stating that “we cannot cut corn if there is not corn to cut” this teacher acknowledges the responsibility of English department of the preparatory year for the unpreparedness of students for FYU level. Academic and specialised RTs are not like those RTs that are written for general English, they contain many academic and technical words, and academic structures (See 2.3, 2.6.1.2 and 2.6.2). However, there is no provision made to train students in this type of vocabulary before they start their FYU, so “there is no corn to cut”. In the next excerpt, another teacher also comments on the expected disjuncture between what students are taught at the

preparatory reading level and the language that students need to master in order to successfully understand the reading in their first university year. He says

I believe that the majority of the students would go to their first year unready to meet the reading there. I think first it would depend on the college, for example, medicine is not like English, and the other thing is that the students should be exposed to the language that they will meet in their first year textbooks. **(Prep. T2)**

The above teacher again acknowledges that the RTs at the preparatory level are different from the texts that students may encounter in their first year of university. In addition, he argues that the level of preparation for the reading in the first year should vary according to the students' fields, as he exemplified that the medicine students may face more difficulty with their reading in the first year than the English students, who may encounter less academic and specialised terminology.

We can see that the students' and teachers' perceptions are consistent with the RT analysis (see chapter four) which found there is a huge gap between the RTs at the preparatory level and the reading that the students will encounter in the first year, especially for the engineering and medicine students, in terms of the academic syntactic features, and the vocabulary including the academic and technical vocabulary which is also known as specialised terminology (See 4.2.1 and 4.3).

5.3.2 The first year students' and their teachers' perspectives on readiness for first year university reading

RQ 5: To what extent do Saudi FYU students and their teachers think that the reading texts at the preparatory level have prepared the students to read English-medium textbooks in their subjects effectively? Why (not)?

There are two distinct views with regard to the students' readiness for the reading demands in the first year. The first point of view was demonstrated by the English and translation group (students and their teachers), and the second view was demonstrated by the engineering and medicine groups (students and their teachers). The following section discusses each point of view.

5.3.2.1 The English group's views

Figure 5.6 shows the students' opinions regarding how well they thought the RTs in the preparatory had developed their ability to deal with the reading in their first year.

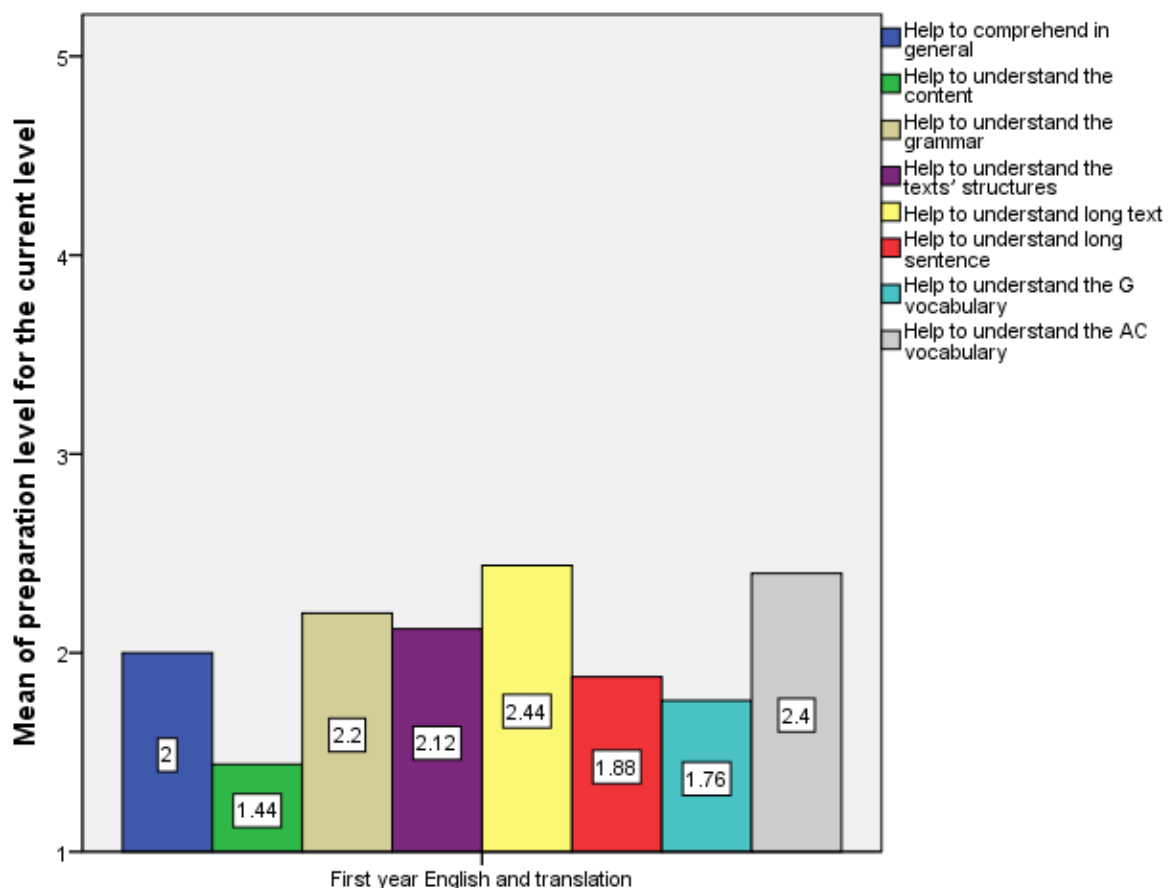


Figure 5.6: The English first year students' opinions regarding the readiness for their reading materials (High score means less prepared and helpful).

Overall, it appears that the RTs at the preparatory level are considered quite helpful by the English first year students in improving their reading ability to comprehend at the required level, as the average overall rating was 2 out of 5, where 5 indicates that the RTs are not helpful at all.

With regards to the other aspects of the texts, the students believe that the RTs at the preparatory level help them most to understand the content and the general vocabulary of what they encounter in their first year, with averages of 1.5 and 1.7 respectively, where 1 indicates very helpful. Next come understanding the grammar (on average 2.4), and the text structures (on average 2.2). Finally, understanding the academic vocabulary and dealing with long texts come as the least well prepared for, though both of them are rated on average at about 2.5 which is still below the midpoint.

Both students' and teachers' perspectives were also gathered through semi-structured interviews, where the results revealed that there is an agreement between teachers and students on how the RTs in the preparatory level prepared the students for the reading demands in the first year English and translation department. For example:

I am not sure exactly what they have studied at the preparatory level but I think that it helped a lot of our students in the reading in the first year. **(Eng. T3)**

Yes the reading texts help me a lot to manage the reading in my first year in the English department. **(Eng. S1)**

However, one student commented about the length of the RTs at the preparatory level by saying:

The reading texts were very helpful, but I think they were often short. When I started my first year I faced some difficulty when I read long texts, but now it is ok. **(Eng. S4)**

The above comment is consistent with the RT analysis, as we found the average text length of 714 words at the English and translation FYU level is far longer than the average text length of 125 words at the preparatory level.

The main reason for the English students and their teachers' opinion is that in the first year in the English and translation department, the students received courses that mainly focus on further improving the students' own English skills, including reading. Thus, the first year in the English and translation department is considered as complementary to the preparatory level, and the reading materials in the first year are similar to the ones at the preparatory level in terms of the topics and the purpose.

Because the reading texts at the preparatory level aim to improve the students' general English reading, and the same thing happens in the first year in the English and translation department, there is not much difference between the reading materials. Maybe the reading texts here [English and translation department] are a bit higher in level. **(Eng. T2)**

According to the RT analysis (see Chapter four), the reading materials of the first year in the English and translation department were indeed the nearest to the RTs at the preparatory level compared with medicine and engineering.

5.3.2.2 The medicine and engineering groups' views

The engineering and medicine students gave entirely different opinions to the English and translation department students. Both medicine and engineering students held very similar views, as can be seen in Figures 5.7 and 5.8.

From Figures 5.7 and 5.8, overall it appears that the RTs at the preparatory level are seen as not helpful by many medicine and engineering students, as they were rated on average at about 4.4

on a scale out of 5 (where 5 indicates not helpful at all) by both groups. This result is in line with Christison & Krahne (1986); Smoke (1988) and Ostler (1980) who reported that students were experiencing difficulty in dealing with the reading at the university level and did not find the reading at the ESL programmes so helpful in dealing with academic authentic texts at the university.

The students believe that the RTs at the preparatory level were not helpful in preparing them to understand the content as well as the technical vocabulary, sentence length and the length of the texts of the reading that they encounter in their first year (the students rated each aspect at about 4.7 on the scale out of 5). The other aspects of the RTs at the preparatory level, namely the general vocabulary, academic vocabulary, grammar and text structures come second. However, they were also considered not helpful in improving the students' reading ability to meet the reading demands of medicine and engineering at first university level, as is seen from their mean ratings ranging from 4.1 to 4.4.

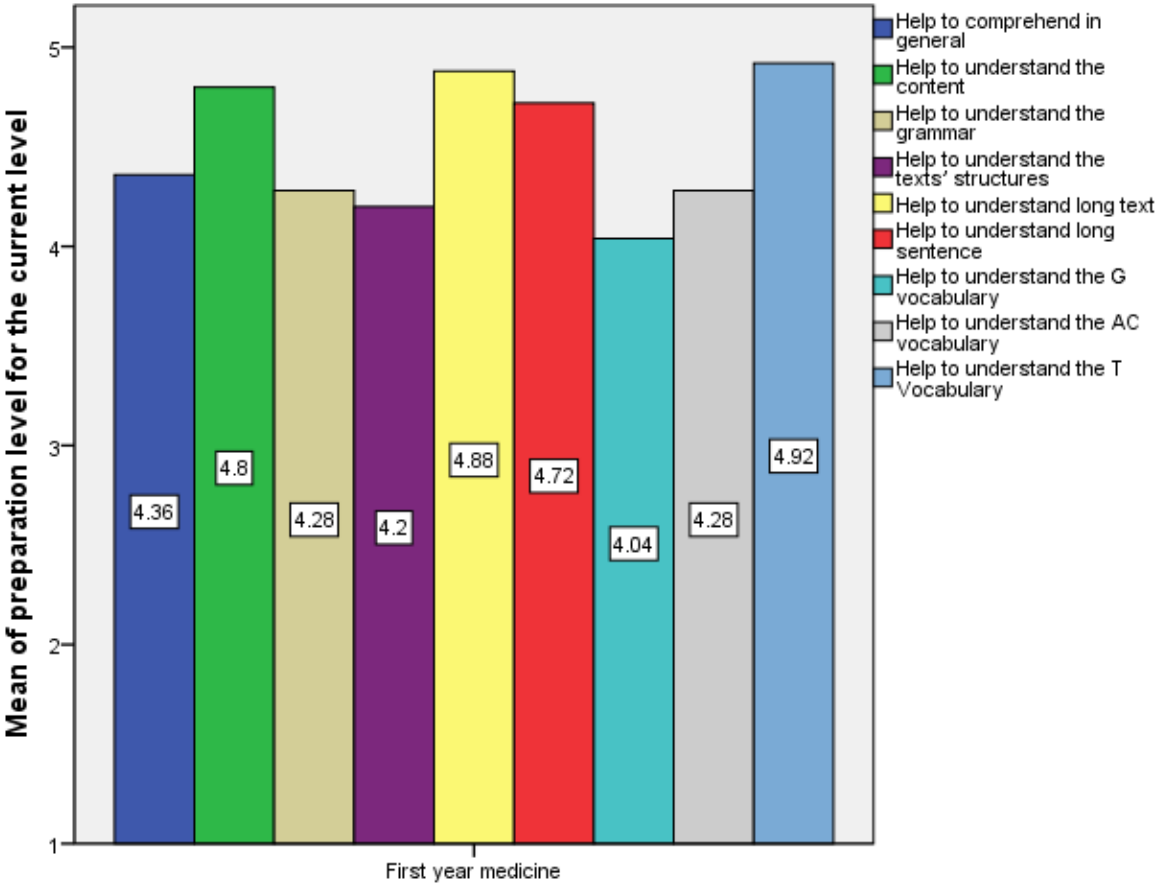


Figure 5.7: The first year medicine students' perceptions about how well the reading texts at the preparatory level have helped them in their reading in their discipline (High score means less prepared and helpful).

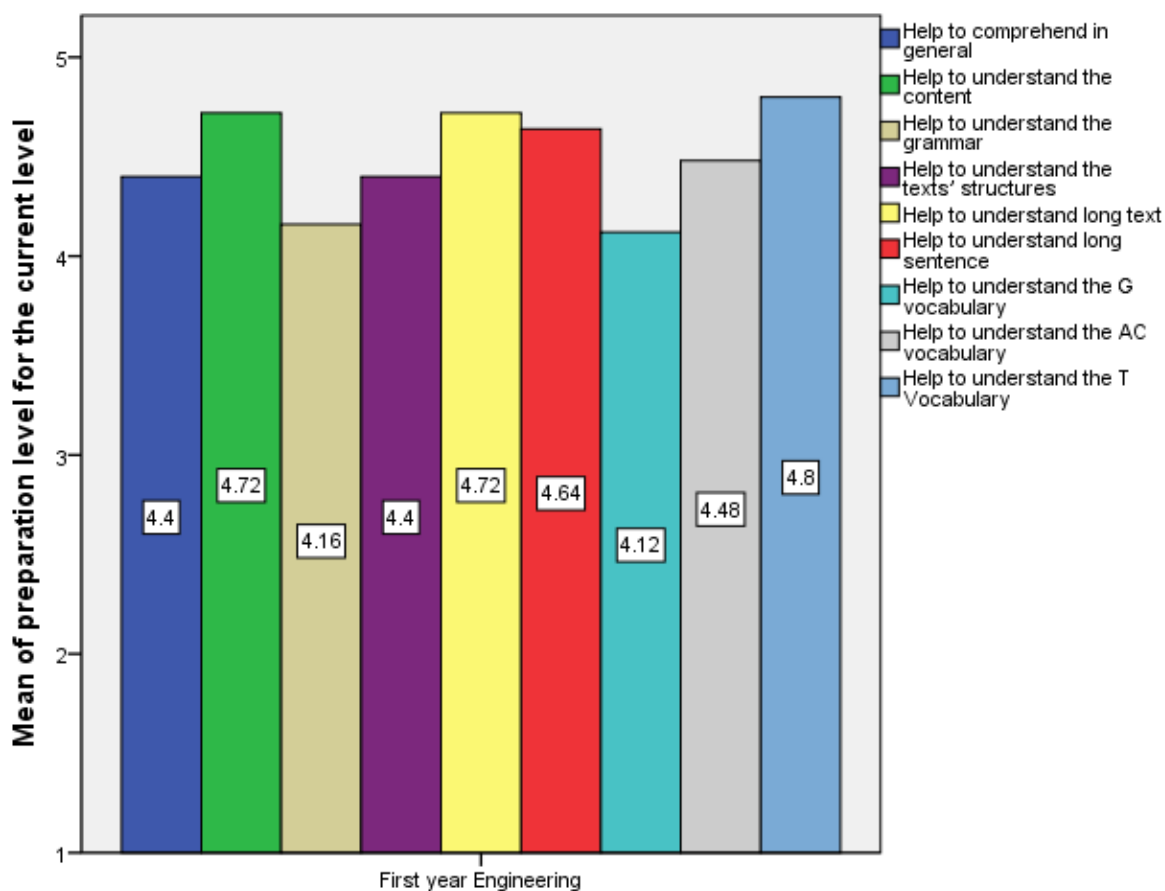


Figure 5.8: The first year engineering students' perceptions about how well the reading texts at the preparatory level have helped them in their reading in their discipline (High score means less prepared and helpful).

From the interviews in both colleges (medicine and engineering) the results showed that the students and their teachers in all the colleges have similar opinions that the RTs at the preparatory level have not prepared the students to meet the reading demands of their first year disciplines.

Although the subject teachers in these colleges had no idea about what the students read at the preparatory level, they commented according to what they observed from the students' reading level. For example:

The students come to the first year with poor reading ability. It seems that they are not exposed to sufficient reading texts that improve their reading skills, and make them able to read their textbooks well. **(Med. T2)**

The students always complain about their reading difficulties with their textbooks, and they always fail to read all of what they have been asked, so I think that it is most likely that the reading at the preparatory level is not strong enough to prepare the students to read in their discipline at their first year. **(Engn. T1)**

The students share the same views as their teachers. For example:

I do not see how what I studied in preparatory is helpful for the reading in my first year. **(Engn. S4)**

[The reading texts in preparatory level] are not helpful. It is waste of time. **(Med. S2)**

The above findings agree with the results of the text analysis of all these features (See chapter four).

A number of reasons were mentioned for the failure of the RTs at the preparatory level in preparing the students for the reading demands that they encounter in their disciplines in the first year. However, due to the teachers' lack of knowledge about the RTs at the preparatory level, most of the following reasons were reported by the medicine and engineering students.

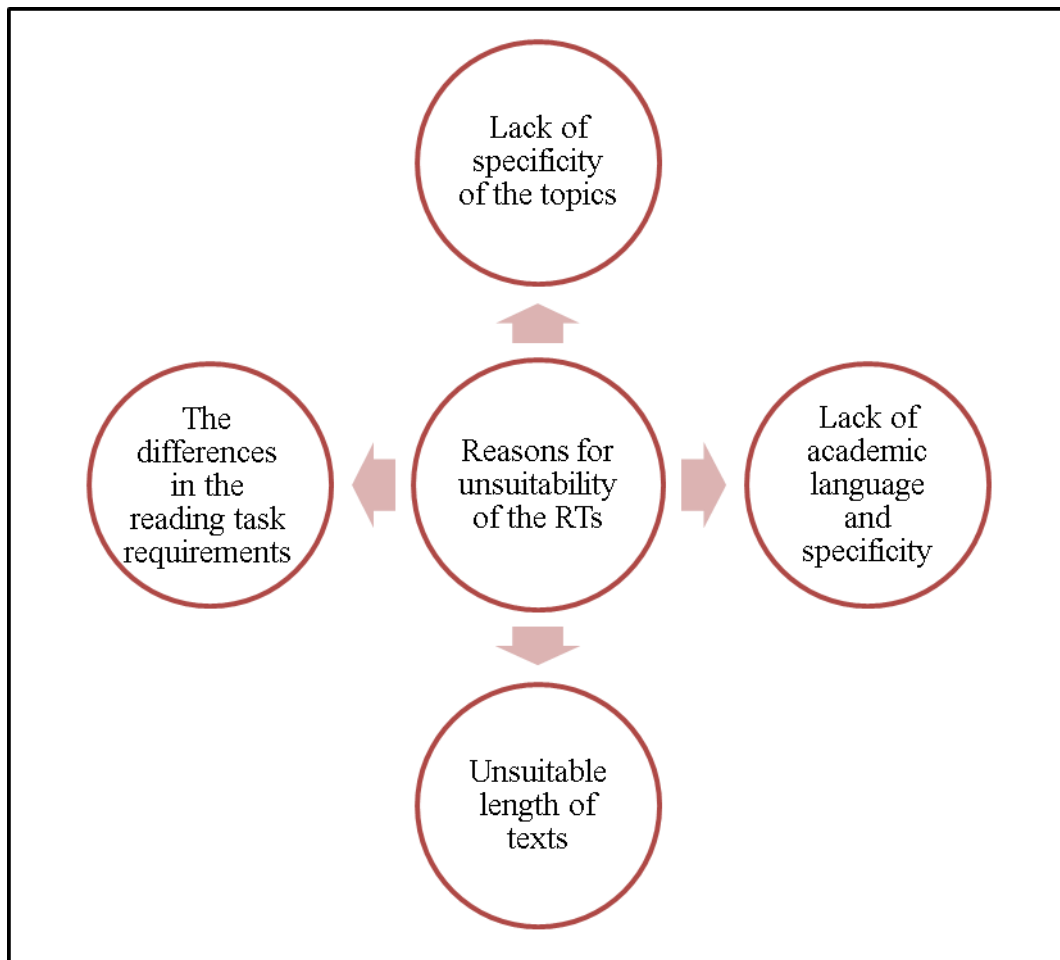


Figure 5.9: The perceived reasons for the reading texts at the preparatory level not being helpful in preparing for the current educational level.

The perceptions of under-preparedness for first year reading are seen to be the result of the differences between the RTs at the preparatory level and the requirements for reading at the FYU level, rather than a lack of basic reading skills on the part of the students. These reasons or differences can be categorised into differences in register, the length of the texts, lack of specificity in content, and the purpose of reading the texts. It could be said that these reasons that are mentioned by the first year students and teachers in medicine and engineering colleges are quite similar to the reasons mentioned by the preparatory students and teachers, but with more specificity.

5.3.2.2.1 Lack of specificity of the topic

The main reason for the students' under-preparedness for first-year reading in their disciplines, as it is seen by most of the students and their teachers, can be linked to the lack of coverage of specialised topics relevant to FYU reading. For example:

In my view the students in their preparatory level are not exposed to reading texts that are closely related to their disciplines, their reading text topics are about something unrelated. **(Engn. T1)**

Some students also commented on this issue by saying:

We study at the preparatory level about general topics which are mostly everyday topics, so when I entered the first year I found what I studied in reading not helpful. **(Med. S1)**

The reading texts at preparatory level were helpful to improve my conversation in daily life, but when it comes to preparing for the reading in the first year, they were not related at all. **(Engn. S3)**

This finding is consistent with what was found from the RT analysis (See 4.6) that the medicine and engineering students may encounter difficulties in understanding the content in their first year at university, as they had received all their prior formal education in foundation subjects such as science, maths etc. in Arabic, and their English program at the preparatory level is not related to their disciplines, which means it is not English for Specific Purposes (ESP), in fact it is more an English for General Purposes programme (EGP).

These results show the important of using ESP in preparing the students which emphasizes on exposing the students to the similar reading language that they will encounter in their academic disciplines which is supported by many teachers (Alghamdi, 2013; Biber, 2006; Hyland, 2002)

5.3.2.2.2 Lack of academic language and specificity

Another reported reason for students' under-preparedness for the FYU reading is differences in register of the RTs that are introduced in Year One of the degree programme, for which students had no prior training at the preparatory level.

Students in both colleges reported that most of the RTs encountered at the preparatory level were taken from general English, and had the text structure, grammar and vocabulary of newspaper reports, casual conversation, or stories.

The reading texts are like those given to kids in intermediate schools, they are not like what students read at university level... different vocabulary and grammar. **(Med. S5)**

The above view was confirmed by the researcher through a casual inspection of the RTs at the preparatory level, and the reading that students are required to meet in Medicine and Engineering colleges in the FYU level.

In fact, the lack of correspondence between the registers of the RTs at the FYU level and at the preparatory level was the reason that most students gave to explain their difficulties with reading at the FYU level, as the teachers also said. For example:

Students always say that the reading we ask them to do is difficult and it is not like what they are used to doing, so I think the reading texts at the preparatory level do not prepare the students to read and deal with texts in their disciplines, which include different vocabulary and structures **(Med. T1)**

All the students and their teachers in both colleges think that students not being admitted into their specialisations from the beginning of joining the university (preparatory level) is the biggest mistake in the colleges. They claimed that the students did not benefit from studying the

general English preparatory modules as the students were not exposed to the vocabulary and the structures that they encounter in the first year in their disciplines, which is collectively known as differences in registers (Biber, 2006; Scarcella, 2003) (See 2.3).

These results are consistent with the results of the RT analysis (see chapter four) which found that there was a great difference between preparatory and medical or engineering texts in the level and the type of vocabulary (See 4.2), the readability level (See 4.3), and the academic syntactic features (See 4.4). This finding may affect the students' success in their study as many researchers argue that mastery of academic language is a crucial determinant of success with academic content for ESL learners, and has been referred to as the key to content area learning (e.g. Alghamdi, 2013; Biber, 2006; Hyland, 2002).

5.3.2.2.3 Unsuitable length of the text

Another reported reason is the difference in the RT lengths between what students were exposed to during the preparatory level and what they encounter in their first university year. For example:

I face difficulty in reading lots of pages, I do not get used to this reading. At the preparatory level the reading texts are short...two or three paragraphs. (**Med. S3**)

All the students reported that they were not prepared to deal with and understand long texts, or with the amount of reading they encountered in their disciplines in the FYU level, as is clearly shown in Figures 5.7 and 5.8. This finding supports our expectations from the RT analysis (See 4.2), that first year students (especially in medicine and engineering) may struggle in dealing with the reading load in the first year, as they had only been exposed to short RTs before that. It also matches some comments by the preparatory year students and teachers (5.3.1.1).

This result agrees with Alderson (2000), Andreassen and Bråten (2009) and Baddeley (2000) views who argue that the length of the texts may affect the readers' reading comprehension.

5.3.2.2.4 The differences in the reading task requirements (The purpose of reading)

The final reason which was mentioned by the students is that, although there are differences in the reading requirements (purpose) and the expectations from students' reading in the first year, there seems to be no provision made to train students in reading the texts through the eye of university students, where the students need to understand, criticise, evaluate and discuss information in their texts.

The reading texts at the preparatory level are just for reading without any purpose of understanding the information and learning it. I read the texts just to find and answer short easy questions that followed the texts, not like in the first year where I needed to find the main information and the things that support this information, and also I read for learning the information. **(Engn. S1)**

Teachers also acknowledged the impact of the absence of such training on students' under-readiness for the reading demands of the first year. Most of the teachers interviewed stated that after finishing the preparatory level, students are not ready yet for the types of reading that they are asked to do in their degree programmes. In addition to stating that students' proficiency levels are low, teachers also acknowledged the difficulty in moving from reading general English for the purpose of answering questions at preparatory level, to reading academic texts in specific disciplines for learning that required more critical reading.

The students do not read for the purpose of learning, and to use the information which they read, they seem to spend most of their time reading general simple texts to answer the questions after, but this does not necessary prepare the students to read academic texts for the purpose of learning. **(Engn. T2)**

The teachers, as seen in the above examples acknowledge the responsibility of Deanship of the Preparatory Year for under-preparedness of the students for FYU reading. As the stated main aim of the preparatory level (See 1.5.1) is to prepare students for their subsequent studies in their degree programmes, and given the importance of academic reading, which is reading to learn content, in students' academic lives in the first year of university, it is not totally unrealistic to assume that attention would be given to create more parallelism and continuity between the RTs and tasks at the preparatory level and in the first year, and to provide students with adequate practice, so that they are better prepared for the reading demands when they join their majors. In the absence of such conditions, it is not surprising that there was a convergence in the opinions of both the students and teachers regarding the under-preparedness of first year students for academic reading.

It is admitted in the literature that “there is little exploration in L2 reading research of the transition from learning-to-read to academic reading-to-learn” (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 85) but exposure to suitable texts and imposition of appropriate reading purposes seems an obvious prerequisite. Our study shows that the English language programme at the NBU seem to have spent a lot of time on learning-to-read and not much time on practicing academic reading to-learn.

5.4 Conclusion

With respect to the secondary level EFSA texts, secondary level teachers and students largely agreed in thinking them not likely to be a good preparation for the preparatory year in any respect: language (esp. academicity), topics, text types, length and number of texts. This was however due to them not knowing the real nature of the preparatory year texts and imagining

them to be more academic and demanding than they actually are. The preparatory year students and teachers therefore found the secondary level EFSA texts a reasonable preparation for the preparatory level reading, which agrees with the text analysis in ch4. Some teachers did however voice the opinion that the students do not come prepared for the sort of reading that they should be being presented with at preparatory level.

With respect to the preparatory year texts, preparatory level students and teachers agreed in thinking them not likely to be suitable in language (academicity), topics, text types or number of texts. They appeared to be largely imagining first year texts to be similar to those found in the engineering or medicine colleges rather than English and translation, however. First year English and translation students and teachers, whose texts had been shown by the text analysis to be not much more demanding than preparatory texts, and not in fact specialised disciplinary reading, in fact found the preparatory year a suitable preparation. First year medicine and engineering students, however, consistent with the text analysis, found the preparatory texts highly unsuitable in preparing them for their first year reading in language (academicity and specificity), topics, text type and length, and the associated task (i.e. to just answer a few simple comprehension questions rather than process critically and learn the content, as required for disciplinary reading).

6 Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together conclusions and implications of the research findings. It starts by presenting a brief overview of the overall findings of the study. This is followed by the implications of the study. Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed, followed by suggestions for further research.

6.2 Summary of the Main Findings

6.2.1 RQ1: What differences are there between English reading texts in each English series at secondary level, at preparatory level, and in the first-year subject class? Features for comparison include general and academic vocabulary, readability (word length and sentence length), academic grammatical features, length of text and content. Do earlier levels successfully prepare learners for later levels?

The results of the text analysis show, first, that there are clear differences in all the comparison features between the reading texts at the pre-university levels (secondary and preparatory) and the required reading at the FYU level, especially in the engineering and medical colleges. This might be attributed to the fact that they represent completely different registers, with totally different purposes. For example, the high occurrence of nominal modification features in the medicine and engineering texts is consistent with their expository and ESAP nature, in contrast with the narrative and dialog EGP texts that are heavily used in the pre-university levels textbooks. However, pre-university reading is a much more favourable antecedent to the reading

texts in the English and translation department with respect to all comparison features investigated. This is because what the students read in the English and translation department FYU is general English (similar to that at the secondary and preparatory levels), not specialised disciplinary academic texts.

Second, the results also show that there are clear differences in most of the comparison features between the reading texts of EFSA and FHFSA, which make FHFSA more challenging and better than EFSA, and indeed than the preparatory reading texts, in preparing the students for academic reading at FYU level. Correspondingly, the results show that the reading texts at the preparatory level are quite similar – sometimes less challenging than – to the reading texts in EFSA and less demanding than FHFSA texts, although they are taught at the higher educational level. In addition, they are also far less challenging than the texts that the students encounter at the FYU level, especially in the engineering and medical colleges. These results suggest that the reading texts that the students encounter over the three successive levels are not graded in progression. This suggests that students may experience huge difficulties in reading at the FYU level, especially in medicine and engineering.

Third, the results show that adequate knowledge of the most frequent 5000 word families (and even more for medicine texts) plus the off-list items is important for reaching 95% coverage of authentic academic texts, and hence minimally adequate comprehension. However, although the reading texts in one secondary English series (FHFSA) are superior to the reading texts at the preparatory level in providing the students with more vocabulary, the reading texts at all pre-university levels provide far less than this threshold vocabulary.

In addition, by investigating the number of expected unfamiliar word types and families that the students may encounter in texts at the next educational level, the results show that the estimated learning demand per hour at the preparatory level is 3.72 word types (2.25 word families) after studying EFSA and 2.38 word types (1.38 word families) after studying FHFSA (assuming that the students have learned all the words they were exposed to at secondary level and discounting that some of these words might have been learned at the earlier intermediate and elementary levels). That is a reasonable learning load in light of the literature on vocabulary learning rates (e.g. Alsaif, 2011; Milton, 2009; also see 4.6.1.4). However, even if the students learn these words, there are still many vocabulary words that students need to learn to be ready for academic reading at the FYU level. Even based on a sample of what FYU students have to read, in order to reach minimally adequate comprehension (95% coverage), medical students, for example, would need to have learnt word families at a rate of 8.7 per hour since starting English (assuming they were exposed to the right words, and not including off-list words containing much terminology).

The results also reveal that AWL vocabulary would help learners meet reading needs at the FYU level in all the disciplines. After completing the reading at preparatory level, however, the students will have been exposed to only 43.5% of the total AWL if they study EFSA at the secondary level and 68.9% if they study FHFSA. This does not even mean that all the academic word types in these word families were covered. Furthermore, it is surprising to find that the percentage of AWL tokens in the preparatory reading materials is far below the suggested percentage of AWL in academic texts (10%, according to Coxhead, 2000), and it is even below the percentage in FHFSA, which is taught at the secondary level.

Finally, the results show that the topics of the reading texts at the secondary level are quite similar to the topics of the reading texts at the preparatory level and also in the FYU of the English and translation department. FYU level students in the medicine and engineering fields, however, encounter specialised topics. Thus, it could be anticipated that the engineering and medicine students would experience difficulties in understanding the content of their reading, as they are not trained to deal with specialised reading topics during their preparatory level.

6.2.2 RQ2: To what extent do Saudi secondary level students and their English teachers think that the reading texts in the secondary English textbooks, EFSA, will prepare students for reading in the preparatory level? Why (not)?

Both students and their teachers agreed that the reading texts in EFSA are not helpful in preparing students to meet the reading demands of the texts at the preparatory level, although they were not fully familiar with the reading at the next level, and hence perceived those texts as being much more demanding and academic than they actually are in our context. They criticised the limited number and shortness of reading texts in EFSA, the low level of vocabulary in these reading texts, the simple and non-academic nature of the grammar, the irrelevant and uninteresting topics, and the lack of variety and suitability of the types of texts (predominantly narratives and dialogs). However, apart from some differences in topics, great differences in the courses do not actually exist between the EFSA and preparatory year texts in language and “academicity”, as our text analyses showed (RQ1).

6.2.3 RQ3: To what extent do Saudi preparatory year students and their English teachers think that reading texts in EFSA secondary English textbooks have prepared the students for their reading in the preparatory year? Why (not)?

The results show that although the majority of the students and their teachers thought that the reading texts in EFSA were indeed helpful in preparing for the reading at the preparatory level, this belief may be due to the less demanding nature of the preparatory reading texts compared with the secondary level, as reported by the students and consistent with the text analysis (RQ1). Thus, all the teachers, nevertheless, appeared dissatisfied with the students' actual reading ability at the preparatory level.

Another possible factor that also makes reading easier in the preparatory year is the difference in the time available for teaching English: both educational levels contain a similar amount of reading material in terms of running words (EFSA and *Top Notch*), but there are 112 more teaching hours at the preparatory level than the total hours over the three years of the secondary level.

6.2.4 RQ4: To what extent do Saudi preparatory year students and their English teachers think that the reading texts at the preparatory level will prepare students for the reading at their FYU level? Why (not)?

Both students and teachers agreed that the reading texts at the preparatory level are not sufficient to prepare the students for this target. Reasons given included the low level of the reading texts at this level (in terms of simple grammatical structures and vocabulary), the limited number and shortness of the reading texts, and the lack of genuinely academic (and specialised) texts.

From the text analysis, all of this is plausible with respect to the first-year medical and engineering reading materials. However, the text analysis showed little difference between the first-year English and translation texts and the preparatory year texts, which was clearly not what the respondents had in mind.

6.2.5 RQ5: To what extent do Saudi first-year students and their teachers think that the reading texts at preparatory year have prepared the students to read English-medium textbooks in their subjects effectively? Why (not)?

The participants reported two different views. First, All English and translation department students and teachers agreed that the reading texts at the preparatory level are helpful in improving the students reading ability and preparing them for what they read at their current level. The main reason behind their view is that the students encounter reading texts which are quite similar to those met at the preparatory level, as the students are still studying English skill improvement courses, including reading, which are more or less considered complementary to what they do at the preparatory level. Another possible suggested reason is that English students may have good English language proficiency; hence, they choose to study in this department rather than go to an Arabic medium department.

However, the medical and engineering participants (students and teachers) expressed the opposite view, which is quite similar to the preparatory level students' and teachers' views and also in line with the text analysis that was conducted in the current study (RQ1). They believed that the reading texts at the preparatory level are too short and lack both topic and language "academicity" and specificity (i.e. they are not related to their fields). Furthermore, they are not read for the same purposes (i.e. critical reading and learning of content) that are required in

genuine first-year disciplinary reading. Therefore, they stated that they are not helpful to prepare them for the reading that they need to deal with at university level.

6.3 General research implications

Our current study answered five main RQs (see 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.2.3, 6.2.4 and 6.2.5), and it is hoped that we provided a respectable contribution to L2 reading research. We see the main contributions to be as follows:

1. This study added information about an area where it has been said that “there is little exploration in L2 reading research of the transition from learning-to-read to academic reading-to-learn” (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 85). Specifically, in the context investigated, where a study like ours had not been done before, the texts chosen at preparatory level proved both from text analysis on many key dimensions, and in the opinion of teachers and learners, to be somewhat simpler than previous secondary texts and to leave far too great a jump in demand to the genuinely academic disciplinary texts read in the following year. This dip in demand in immediate pre-university English texts, associated with the use of an international GE textbook, followed by an impossibly steep rise in demand presented by disciplinary academic texts, is remarkably similar to the findings of Freahat (2014) in the neighbouring EFL country of Jordan. This raises the question for researchers whether any EFL contexts around the world provide an adequately graded progression of reading texts culminating in a level of demand that affords students a suitable transition to fully academic reading in their disciplines. The implication is that more studies such as ours are needed in EFL/ESL contexts of reading texts, stretching across three successive levels (secondary and preparatory to the FYU level). Clearly,

there may be serious mismatches between what occurs at each level when no single authority oversees and plans the sequence/syllabus.

2. Some researchers in our context have investigated vocabulary (e.g. Al-Saif, 2011; Al-Akloby, 2001), although these studies may be considered outdated, as many improvements have since taken place in the English curriculum at secondary level (see 1.7). Nevertheless, our study shows that the situation is slightly better today in that although we did not investigate vocabulary knowledge of Saudi students, we have shown that over secondary and preparatory levels they are not even exposed to the required vocabulary to reach the threshold of 5000 families; hence it is most unlikely that they could have learnt them. Indeed, more worrying, even if the texts at school and preparatory level did collectively expose learners to the requisite word families, which they do not, given the number of hours allotted to English, the learning load of 4.5 families per contact hour would be at the high end of what is considered possible (4.7 'words' per hour). Again this calls for similar work in other similar contexts, such as the Gulf states and Jordan, to see if the KSA is alone in facing this learning time challenge, and how it can be met (e.g. by assigning extra teaching hours or relying on learners autonomously learning out of class time).
3. This is the first study in the literature to provide a comprehensive picture, using text analysis of many key features and both teacher and student report, of how the pre-university reading text input in an EFL context differs from the academic disciplinary texts (medicine and engineering) which those same students encounter later. We have shown that in areas where we can compare, such as the academic syntactic features, AWL and sentence length, the preparatory year texts in the NBU are considerably less demanding even than the pre-sessional reading texts commonly used for non-native

speakers in an English L1 context such as the USA (Miller, 2011). For example, sentence length is on average 1.75 words per sentence shorter in immediate pre-university English text than academic discipline text in Miller's study, but 9.6 words shorter in our study, where a difference similar to Miller's US one is found only for the secondary textbook FHFSA. This suggests a need for further research comparing pre-sessional courses in English L1 countries that host international students with preparatory years in contexts like the KSA to see what can be learnt, despite the fact that the former are not yet considered optimal either (Miller, 2011).

4. We took the trouble in this study not only to chart the vocabulary progression across levels in terms of numbers and percentages of tokens, types and families at different BNC frequency bands, but also in terms of actual numbers of these items shared or not shared between texts at different levels. While the overall picture of the progression is much the same in both approaches, the latter was essential for estimating accurately for a given level both the coverage of texts by vocabulary that learners had previously had a chance to learn and the real burden of vocabulary remaining for them to learn. Knowing that the secondary textbook EFSA contains members of 1818 word families while the preparatory level texts represent 1991 families does not mean that 1818 of families in the latter will be already known by learners who studied EFSA well. Short of estimation on the basis of chance overlap, there is no way of predicting, and indeed here the actual overlap is remarkably high at 1188. Furthermore, this prompts the notion of efficiency of texts at a given position in a progression, which we feel may be of use to researchers interested in vocabulary in relation to a reading syllabus. EFSA, representing 1188 families shared with the next level, could be said to have a preparation efficiency of $(1188 \times 100) / 1818 = 65.4\%$ while FHFSA, though representing many more preparatory

level families at 1561, so in that sense a better preparation, does so with far less efficiency = $(1561 \times 100) / 3185 = 49\%$. Put another way, a reader of FHFSA will find that only about half the families he meets and may try to learn are useful at the next level, while a reader of EFSA will find almost two thirds go towards his 'readiness' for the next level.

5. According to Nunan (1988), the learners' views and expectations are important in developing a curriculum. The current study not only gathered such data but also enabled it to be evaluated through cross-reference with the views of teachers and the evidence of the analysis of the reading texts themselves. Although in many ways the views of teachers and students were similar and matched the evidence from the texts, we uncovered that the former were suffering from some misconceptions, especially as to the true nature of the preparatory level texts, which they understandably thought to be much more demanding and academic than they actually were. This has implications for researchers who rely excessively on self-report data and disregard putting in the extra effort to ascertain the hard facts about the object of the reports, in this case the texts themselves.

6.4 Local pedagogical implications

A number of crucial implications of our findings for the relevant agencies in the KSA context can also be identified.

6.4.1 Implications for both the MoE and the NBU

The results show that the preparatory level seems to have failed to minimize the reading gap that students encounter at FYU level, especially in the disciplines of medicine and engineering, despite the declared objectives of that level. Thus, it is important that decision makers in both the MoE and the NBU Preparatory Year Deanship work together to revise not only the preparatory year program, especially textbooks, but also the preceding secondary level program which needs to lead up to it. For example, they could agree that the MoE should employ FHFSA in all the SSs and that the NBU should use more advanced, genuinely EAP, textbooks, or they could agree on trying FHFSA at preparatory level and exclude the *Top Notch* textbooks, since FHFSA is better than EFSA and even better than *Top Notch* (the preparatory level English series) in preparing the students for genuinely academic reading at the FYU level.

6.4.2 Implications for the state schools (MoE)

1. The findings of the study suggest that the MoE should make serious changes to the core of the curriculum for English in state schools, relating to the teaching time and prescribed textbooks, taking the following into consideration:
 - A. The secondary reading texts in both English series, EFSA and FHFSA, include considerably less than the minimum threshold vocabulary size that is needed for adequate reading comprehension of authentic non-specialised texts, which consists of 5000 word families and represents a sensible goal for English teaching in school (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010) (see 4.2.2: 45% of families not represented in FHFSA, and 66% of families not represented in EFSA). Admittedly, we do not know what further families were in the intermediate and elementary level texts – if indeed there were

reading texts there – but in any case one would expect them to reappear in secondary level texts, so as to promote learning through recycling. One implication, therefore, is that different textbooks, and /or additional reading materials, are needed at all school levels so that students are at least exposed to all the requisite vocabulary. Another issue concerns “how many hours are needed to get to 5000 families at a reasonable learning rate?” If we take 4 per hour to be a reasonable rate, though this is at the high end of what the literature suggests is possible within class hours (Alsaif, 2011; Milton, 2009; also see 4.6.1.4), this implies 1250 hours, which is way more than the current 720. The implication is that the MoE should revise their English curriculum in the state school, especially the number of classes per week. It is clear that the MoE has realized this problem to some degree, and hence has increased the number of teaching hours through introducing English language from the fourth grade instead of the sixth grade at the elementary level. However, we argue that even that is not enough, if the goal is, with a further 400 hours of EGAP and ESAP in the preparatory year, to prepare students for English medium university study. Continuing with the existing hours, even with materials that expose students to all the requisite vocabulary, implies heavy reliance on students learning vocabulary out of class, which would again require changes to SS teaching to motivate students to do this and supply them with good learning strategies.

- B. The findings of the study suggest that not enough attention has been paid to the AWL in the reading texts in either of the secondary English series: although FHFS is much better than even preparatory reading materials, 48% of AWL families were still not covered. Thus, AWL word families not already covered by the 5000 above (around 13% or 74 families) should also be represented, not leaving the majority of AWL to be covered at the preparatory level.

- C. The findings of the study show clear differences in academic syntactic features between the reading texts at the secondary level and the reading students encounter in the academic context. Therefore, the findings of this study and other studies that have investigated the academic registers (e.g. Biber, 1998) should be taken into consideration to provide students with grammatically appropriate secondary level reading input. This does not mean employing academic reading texts at the school level, but more instances of the academic syntactic features could be used in the reading texts to expose the students to the sorts of syntactic features that are employed in academic prose, without making the vocabulary or content especially academic. In a similar way, our findings show that mean sentence length, and so readability, also needs attention: at present the EFSA mean (12.4 words) is a little low and the FHFSA mean (16.8) too high for secondary level. Textbooks should aim across all SS levels to gradually increase in sentence length to reach a mean of perhaps 14 words per sentences by the end of secondary level, leaving preparatory level to work that up towards 18/19 for specialist FYU textbooks.
- D. Secondary level students were dissatisfied with the topics of the reading texts in EFSA. Providing texts at all levels with topics that are more interesting and generally related to fields which students may study at university level serves two valuable purposes. It may motivate the students to read more (and learn vocabulary, grammar etc. from the reading), and it will provide them with general background knowledge that may help them in their future university study.
- E. Finally, we identified text length as an issue to be addressed. This is almost the only area where EFSA was more demanding than FHFSA and perhaps offered the more suitable school exit level of 390 words. It needs to be ensured that any new textbooks/reading

materials in school offer texts graded to reach around 400 words per text by the end of secondary level, to provide a reasonable platform for the preparatory year to build up to over 1000, which is the likely minimum at FYU level.

2. Our findings confirm those of several other studies (e.g., Al-Bogami, 1995; Al-Hazemi, 1993; Al-saif, 2011) that many students exit the school system into preparatory level with low English vocabulary size and reading ability. This is not entirely due to the limitations we have shown in what they are currently exposed to (e.g. in EFSA). It also evidences that what they are exposed to is not being adequately learnt. Hence all the suggestions above about improving what they are exposed to both in the amount of time and suitability of textbooks will not be successful if students still do not learn much from the input. We have mentioned improving the reading topics as one factor that could affect motivation to learn, but another key factor is the assessment. Therefore, increasing the quality of English exams in school and the weight placed on passing them could help ensure that learning takes place. The MoE should increase student awareness about the importance of improving English reading skills, and students should take reading seriously and learn the vocabulary as much as possible. Doing the minimum to pass the exam is not enough, especially for those who want to join English medium colleges.

6.4.3 Implications for the NBU and the MoE (Higher education section)

1. The results show a huge gap in almost all respects measured between the reading texts at the preparatory level and the texts that the students encounter in the FYU, especially in the medical and engineering fields. Thus, quick action is needed with respect to the preparatory reading texts/syllabus.

- A. The results of the current study provide valuable information to the NBU about the level of reading materials that students are exposed to prior to and during the preparatory level in comparison with the FYU. This could help the decision makers at the NBU in developing their own reading materials or choosing new textbooks, especially for medical and engineering students. This change in principle applies to all students on English medium BAs, including English and translation if the students there were to embark on disciplinary subject reading in the FYU rather than delay it as now to the second year. However, the present materials could continue to be used for students who will be studying non-English-medium majors, so have general rather than academic English needs, and English and translation (if no changes occur in their FYU modules).
- B. For students entering English medium academic disciplinary study in the FYU the preparatory level should focus on EGAP and ESAP, not only on GE. Such students could, as one group, move gradually from GE to EGAP, where special attention could be given to the AWL and academic syntactic features and then, divided into disciplinary-specific groups, to ESAP (separately for medicine, engineering and, potentially, English and translation as an academic subject) (Figure 6.1). At the last stage there would need to be cooperation between preparatory English teachers and FYU subject teachers and further consideration of the timing and role of English terminology courses, given by subject teachers (as exists for medicine in the FYU at present). The results show that medical and engineering students encounter a huge amount of TV in their FYU reading. It would be more helpful if the students were introduced to a terminology course at least in the last term of the preparatory year.

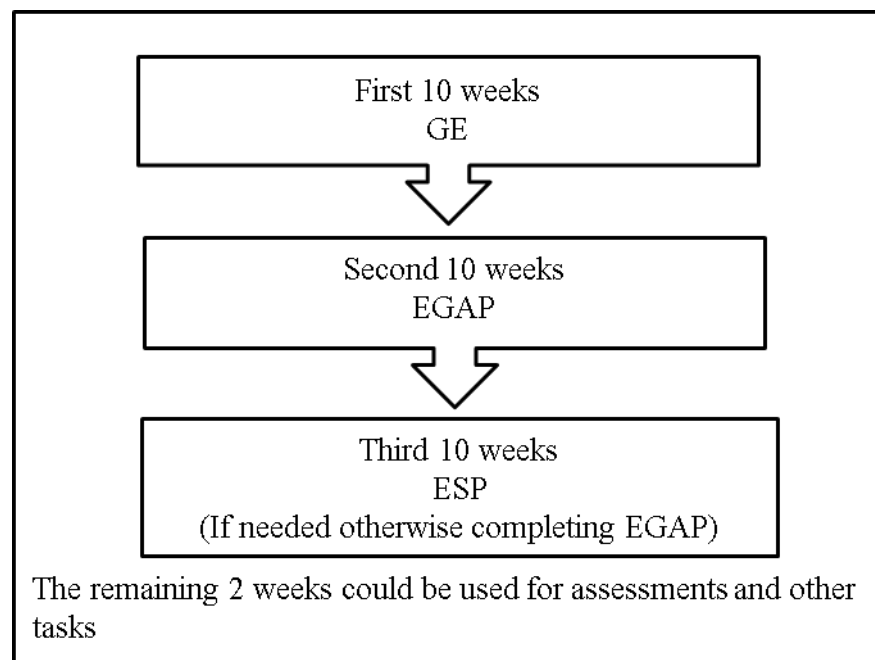


Figure 6.1: Proposed schedule for the preparatory year for students destined to take English medium majors

2. It is important that the preparatory level should attract teachers, who have good background knowledge about the students' future majors and are willing to collaborate with FYU subject teachers, towards more ESAP materials.

3. The NBU may need to revise the open entry policy to the preparatory year regardless of English proficiency, particularly for those who are going to study English medium majors. It might be better if there is a University Entrance Exam (as in other EFL countries such as Japan) with a minimum English proficiency score required from students intending to take an English medium major. This might motivate the students to improve their English level more, including reading, while at school. Also, it would ensure that medical and engineering students do not enter the preparatory year with English proficiency that is too low to be able to be raised in one year to a viable level for entering the FYU.

4. The NBU should employ high-quality English placement tests at the start of the preparatory year and ensure that the students are arranged in specific classes based on their English level (and for ESAP their disciplines). Those placed in higher proficiency classes should not then start being taught English from the beginning again, as happens at present with the Top Notch series, which is taught from the beginning to all preparatory students.

5. After proper changes have been made to the preparatory materials, further suggestions may also help in preparing students who are going to study through English medium for reading in their disciplines at the FYU level:

- Schedule meetings without a teacher who is present between preparatory level students and FYU students and who could share their challenges with preparatory students, so as to inspire them to work harder; they can also give them inside information (students are more likely to believe other students).
- Schedule some sessions (maybe starting the last term of the preparatory level) for preparatory students to attend selected subject lectures and give them practice reading assignments that are related to the lectures that they have attended; then the students might be assessed by their future academic staff.
- Schedule some sessions for preparatory teachers and English medium colleges' staff to discuss the problems that students encounter in reading in their academic disciplines, and suggest ways to improve the preparatory level English course. This sort of meeting could be held at the beginning of each year.

6.5 Implications for materials designers and teachers

EFL materials designers and English teachers who use such materials should recognize, as findings of this study suggest, that there are clear differences between EGP reading texts and the reading students encounter in academic university textbooks. Hence, an immediate pre-university EGAP textbook cannot usefully employ only general English texts in terms of topics, grammar and vocabulary. More focus should be on vocabulary that is beyond the 2000 most frequent bands, and on the AWL. In addition, educators should also pay more attention to raising the students' awareness of the academic syntactic features through employing them in the reading texts when possible. Exposing students to this material will provide opportunities for them to practice decoding these academic features. Finally, topics need to be chosen which, while not requiring specialist subject knowledge, nevertheless cover themes relevant to future specialist studies.

Besides EGAP, with Hyland (2002), ESAP needs to be properly recognised as a separate area requiring its own textbooks for each target discipline. Indeed, ESAP materials designers may also benefit from this study, as it shows some differences in the lexico-grammatical features between different academic registers (medicine and engineering).

6.6 Limitations of the Study

The study succeeded in providing useful data to answer its research questions (6.2). However, the study is not without limitations, some of which are acknowledged below.

- First, the reading texts were examined at three educational levels: secondary, preparatory and FYU. However, English is taught nowadays from the fourth grade at the

elementary level, which means for six years prior to the secondary level. Not including an analysis of texts from the early stages makes it hard to tell how suitable EFSA or FHFSa are with respect to the texts that students have dealt with before, though we strongly suspect that FHFSa would emerge as excessively demanding. Also, this makes it hard to assess the total vocabulary that learners might have been exposed to prior to the end of the preparatory year. The decision to include only the secondary level was however made not only to limit the project to what was manageable but also because a stated objective of this level is to prepare the students for university study, which means that preparation for university level starts from secondary level.

- Second, the preparatory level and FYU level reading materials come from one university out of 32 universities in Saudi Arabia. Although the relevance of the current findings for other universities is conceivable, given the similarities in some aspects of these universities (i.e. they use the same textbooks and syllabi for most of the academic departments and colleges), the results of this study may not be a completely accurate representation of the other universities. That is because, as was emphasised throughout the thesis, the preparatory deanship at the NBU is responsible for choosing the English textbooks for the preparatory year, and other universities may use different English textbooks at preparatory level or may organize the preparatory year differently to include EAP materials. In addition, our FYU level reading material comes from three different disciplines: engineering, medicine, and English and translation. These disciplines are the only ones at the NBU that use English as the medium of instruction. However, other universities, such as King Saud University in Riyadh, have different disciplines that are taught in English, such as business.

- Third, this study only focused on the FYU disciplinary level, yet it emerged that the students in the English and translation department, unlike students in other departments and colleges, were not yet studying specialised disciplinary subject courses in linguistics, literature and so on. Hence, the findings in this study cannot be overgeneralised to say that the English and translation students will or will not find that the reading texts at the preparatory level are helpful in meeting the reading demands in their specialised textbooks in their discipline, when they reach them in their second year. We strongly suspect that they may not, even with the additional year of similar reading.
- Fourth, the corpora of FYU level texts for medicine and engineering were limited to samples for practical reasons, such as the time needed to scan and check large quantities of text and the difficulty in determining the precise limits of what a first-year student was expected to read. Hence, our analysis did not include all the textbooks that students are required to read. Therefore, the study may have underestimated things in some areas (e.g. the amount of vocabulary that needs to be known to achieve 95% coverage).
- This study was all about the potential preparedness of students due to suitability of reading texts at the pre-university levels, and it did not measure the actual reading ability or vocabulary knowledge of anyone at any level. It was concerned with what is available to be learnt, not what is actually learnt, which is always less (depending on the quality of teaching and learning). But if something is not available in input, it definitely will not be learnt.
- The study also does not cover input other than from the texts in the textbooks. Nor does it deal with associated tasks with the text (e.g. comprehension questions).

- It must be recognised that word types shared between texts from different educational levels do not necessarily indicate the potential preparedness of students for later levels, if they learn all the vocabulary at earlier ones, because of homography and polysemy.
- Finally, due to limitations of time and space, we did not analyse text types/genres at each educational level and did not include the analysis of the progression of the reading texts in the measured features over the three years of secondary level.

6.7 Suggestions for Future Research

Some suggestions are implicit in the discussion in 6.3 and 6.5. We particularly mention the following here:

- Further research would be useful in examining and comparing the EFL students' actual reading (and vocabulary etc.) ability at each level, culminating in the FYU level in various disciplines. This would enable a clearer picture to be obtained of the gap between input and learning.
- Further research is needed for examining the suitability of the EFL textbooks that are used in preparing English medium majors for the FYU level in terms of other academic skills, such as writing, listening and understanding lectures.
- Further studies may be needed to investigate other aspects related to reading texts in EFL English textbooks, such as the reading comprehension questions and how these questions help in preparing students to comprehend academic texts at the required level

expected by their subject teachers. This could be aided by analysing these questions in terms of reading comprehension questions taxonomy (e.g. Freeman, 2013).

- Further research is needed to investigate the reading text input at the elementary and intermediate levels to see which English series is better suited to the students at the secondary level, EFSA or FHFSA. Is EFSA too easy for the students, and is FHFSA too challenging for the students, despite being a better step towards preparation for university?
- Similar research needs to be carried out in the other universities in the KSA, so as to obtain a comprehensive picture of the suitability of the reading texts used at the preparatory level in preparing students for the FYU level. This may help decision makers at the universities in choosing the proper English textbooks at the preparatory level in the future. In addition, further research may be needed to investigate the preparedness of students at the FYU level for reading in other disciplines that we did not have the chance to investigate in this study.
- A similar study may need to be conducted to investigate the suitability of the reading texts used in the first year in the English and translation department for preparing students to meet the reading demands in their specialised textbooks in the second year.
- Finally, the current study investigated the students' preparedness for reading in their disciplines at the FYU level only. As students progress in their degrees, they are understandably expected to read more specialised texts in later years at the university. Therefore, it is worth investigating the students' reading ability after spending one year in their disciplines.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Example of unit from EFSA year three textbook (Unit 4)

1. EFSA Student's book

UNIT 4 Lesson 1

Ramadan

*If you had to explain Ramadan to a foreigner, how would you do it?
 Listen to this conversation between a Saudi boy and an English boy.*

DISCUSSION:


A. Answer the following questions after you have listened to the conversation?


1. What happens after sunset?
2. What does fasting help Muslims remember?
3. What is the name of the big celebration at the end of *Ramadan*?

B. Now find the questions from the conversation which use these words:

1. *It lasts for ?*
2. *Something special ?*
3. *But you didn't ?*

C. Finally, what else do you think a foreigner might want to know about *Ramadan*?





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UNIT 4 **Lesson 2**
CONVERSATION PRACTICE

- ① Practise repeating part of the conversation from lesson 1 with your teacher.
- ② Practise the conversation at A below.

	A	B	C
Roger:	Ramadan lasts for a month, doesn't it?	<i>Their course one year,</i>	<i>Her holiday six weeks,</i>
Ahmad:	Yes, <i>it does.</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>it</i>
Roger:	But you didn't fast the whole of Ramadan last year, did you?	<i>they attend the course in April,</i>	<i>she had six weeks last time.</i>
Ahmad:	No, <i>I didn't. I was ill.</i>	<i>They had a holiday.</i>	<i>she had five.</i>
Roger:	Something special happens at the end of Ramadan, doesn't it?	<i>the course,</i>	<i>the holiday,</i>
Ahmad:	Yes, <i>it does.</i>		

- ③ Make more conversations like the one in 2 above but this time use the words in column B and then in column C.

UNIT 4

Lesson 3

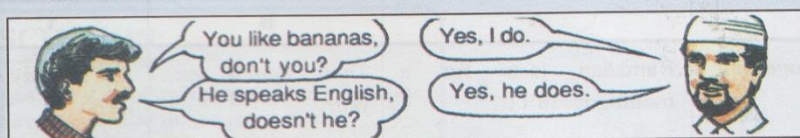
GRAMMAR

Questions That Expect the Answer Yes or No

1

Questions in the Present Tense That Expect the Answer Yes

A. Look at these questions and answers again:



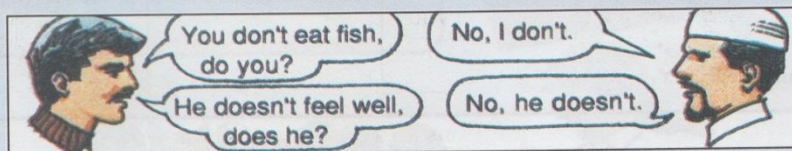
B. Make some more questions and answers like this with the following:

1. *They attend this school.*
2. *He wants an ice cream.*
3. *You have a bicycle.*

2

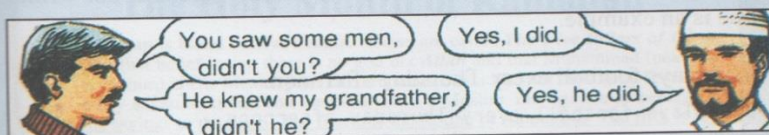
Questions in the Present Tense That Expect the Answer No

A. Look at these questions and answers again:

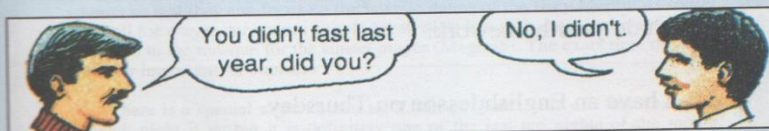


B. Make some more questions and answers like this with the following:

1. *They don't eat fish.*
2. *He doesn't come from Saudi Arabia.*
3. *You don't have a bicycle.*

UNIT 4**Lesson 3****GRAMMAR****3****Questions in the Past Tense That Expect the Answer Yes****A. Look at these questions and answers again:****B. Make some more questions and answers like this with the following:**

1. *They bought a house.*
2. *He wanted an ice cream.*
3. *You went to England.*

4**Questions in the Past Tense That Expect the Answer No****A. Look at these questions and answers again:****B. Make some more questions and answers like this with the following:**

1. *They didn't do their homework.*
2. *She didn't come here on Friday.*
3. *You didn't fly to school.*

UNIT 4 **Lesson 3**
Grammar

Make the following sentences into questions which expect the answer “Yes” or “No” and write the answers, too.

Note that these questions and answers are usually spoken, not written. The first one is an example.

1. Fahd plays football every Thursday afternoon.

Fahd plays football every Thursday afternoon,
doesn't he?

Yes, he does.

2. They didn't go to the United States last year.

3. Youssef wrote to his pen-friend last week.

4. Ali and his brother don't speak English.

5. You helped your father last night.

6. You didn't do your homework.

7. We don't have an English lesson on Thursday.

8. He lives in Saudi Arabia.

9. She didn't make that cake herself.

10. I passed that test.

UNIT 4

Lesson 4

Reading

The Holy Month of Ramadan

Islam is based on five beliefs. These are called *The Five Pillars of Islam*. The first belief is that there is no god but *Allah* and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His Messenger. The second is that a Muslim must pray five times a day at certain times, and the third is that a Muslim must give a percentage of his savings to the poor. The fourth is the fasting of *Ramadan*. The fifth is that all Muslims who are able should perform Al-Hajj (Pilgrimage) at least once in their lives.

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. All adult Muslims must fast during the daylight hours. They are not allowed to eat or drink between dawn and sunset for the whole month. Fasting strengthens a person by increasing his self-control. It also helps a Muslim to keep on remembering Allah and obeying Him. During Ramadan, the feeling of hunger is shared by everyone. This way shows equality among Muslims.

Some people (Children for example) are excused from fasting. Some may be too old or too ill. Others are on journeys. Women who are expecting or nursing a baby cannot fast at that time, either. However, all those who are able must complete their fast later.

Ramadan customs are very special. Many Muslims prefer to change working hours so that they can focus on the Islamic duties of the Holy Month. At sunset, as call for prayer announces people break their fast with dates and water. Then, they go to the mosque for the sunset prayer (Maghrib). The exact time of sunset is very important, of course.

There is a special night known as "*Lailatul Qadr*". No one knows exactly which night it is, but it is definitely one of the last ten nights of the month. Around this time, Muslims try to stay awake all night and perform special prayers, in order to seek *Lailatul Qadr*.

Immediately after the last day of *Ramadan*, there is a celebration called *Eid-Al-Fitr*. Muslims all over the world celebrate this holiday. During Eid, Muslim children wear new clothes and receive gifts. Families everywhere enjoy themselves with friends and relatives. They thank Allah for His great blessings in revealing the *Qur'an* during the Holy Month of *Ramadan*.

UNIT 4**Lesson 5****A. Write a title for each paragraph of the passage.**

Paragraph 1: _____

Paragraph 2: _____

Paragraph 3: _____

Paragraph 4: _____

Paragraph 5: _____

Paragraph 6: _____

Reading**B. Read the following statements about the passage. Put T (True) or F (False) and the line number. Write out a correct statement if you put F.**

- | | T or F? | Line(s) | |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The five beliefs of Islam are often called The five Towers of Islam. |
| 2. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fasting strengthens a person. |
| 3. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Old people and sick people are excused from fasting but travellers are not. |
| 4. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | People break their fast at sunrise. |
| 5. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We do not know the exact date of <i>Lailatul Qadr</i> . |

UNIT 4

Lesson 5

Word Study

cannon
celebration
equal
fast
income

nurse
reveal
set
sleepy
thread

Read the words around each of the boxes below. Then find one word from the list above that is like those words. Finally, write that word in the box.

1. Eid Al-Adha
Eid Al-Fitr

2. button sew
sewing-machine

3. big gun
noisy shoot

4. feed milk
mother

5. the same
not different

6. in bed
bored tired

7. money salary
monthly

8. make clear
show

9. west sun
go down

10. no food no drink
empty stomach

UNIT 4

Lesson 6

REVISION

Articles

1 What does the article *a* or *an* mean?

The noun after the article *a* or *an* is:

1. singular, e.g., *a bus* *a porter* *an article* (so we never write or say *a-buses* *a-porters*)
2. one of several or many, e.g., a porter means one of several porters, and it is not important which one you use.

We cannot use *a* or *an* with nouns like *water, oil, sugar* etc., because they do not usually have a plural form.

2 What does the article *the* mean?

The noun after the article *the* is:

1. singular or plural, e.g., *the porter* *the bags*
2. special for some reasons. Here are some examples:
 - a. *He got on a bus. He had to stand because the bus was full.*
 - b. *The bus stopped at the departure building.*
 - c. *He joined the queue at the check-in counter.*
 - d. *You won't be able to board the plane without it.*
 - e. *The sun rises in the east.*
 - f. *This is the last sentence.*

Why are the nouns in these sentences special?

3 Write *a*, *an*, *the* or nothing.

Scrambled Eggs

To make scrambled eggs for one person, you need two eggs and some milk. First, you break _____ eggs into _____ pan and beat them with _____ wooden spoon. Then you pour _____ milk into _____ pan. You can also add _____ salt and _____ pepper if you wish. Next, you put _____ pan onto _____ cooker and heat _____ eggs and milk slowly. You must stir _____ mixture with _____ wooden spoon as it cooks. When _____ scrambled eggs are ready, serve them on _____ warm plate with _____ piece of _____ bread and _____ butter.

2. EFSA Workbook (Year Three, Unit 4)

UNIT 4

A

MORE ABOUT PUNCTUATION

Commas

We use commas like this:

1. Between every item in a list (but not before *and*):

Elephants, tigers, rhinoceroses, whales and oryx are endangered species.

2. After words used to introduce a sentence :

First, they break their fast.

Next, they pray.

Later, they visit friends.

In 1985, air fares were reduced.

No, I don't.

3. After long clauses at the beginning of a sentence:

After they break their fast, they pray.

When they go shopping, they buy things for the Eid.

Although he speaks Arabic well, he cannot read it.

Continue on the next page ➡

UNIT 4

4. Before too when it comes at the end of a sentence:

I like apples and I like oranges, too.

Commas, continued

and we use commas like this:

5. In questions which expect the answer Yes or the answer No :



He speaks Arabic, doesn't he?

She doesn't like rice, does she?



6. To separate numbers over a thousand, like this:

1,000 1,432 10,186 100,389 1,000,000 10,486,312

Do not use commas in years: 1,994 is a number. 1994 is a year.

7. In special parts of letters, e.g.,



Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Dear Sir,
yours faithfully,



Yours faithfully,

Continue on the next page →

UNIT 4

Now, write out the sentences below adding commas:

1. Riyadh Hofuf and Dhahran were on the route in 1954. However other towns were added in 1956.

2. Before 1984 Riyadh airport was handling 5000000 domestic passengers a year.

See the appendix.

UNIT 4

B

Look at the notes below with your teacher.

Make sure that you understand them.

Night Ramadan Syria

break fast a bowl of soup pray.

walk streets short twilight.

Groups young men walk visit friends

stay up late most some sleep.

Just before dawn man walks through the
streets beats drum calls as loud
as he can.

calling people get up and eat.

UNIT 4**C**

Listen to the cassette and look at the notes again.

**D**

Work with your teacher and your classmates to write a paragraph about *A Night in Ramadan in Syria*. Use the information in the notes. Try to write the same sentences as you heard on the cassette.

E

Read the paragraph on the next page about *A Night in Ramadan in Turkey*. There is one mistake in every line. Underline the mistakes. Then, write the corrections in the box on the right.

The first one is done for you.

Continue on the next page ➞

UNIT 4

A Night in Ramadan in turkey

CORRECTIONS

1	Turkey
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	

In Turkey, many Muslims break their fast with olives before they pray after families have eaten and drunk they walk through the streets. They often visit friends and family, they go shopping for the Eid too. People stay up late during ramadan but most get some sleep. Just before dawn people can be heard again in the houses. They are getting up to eat before the day begins

F

Look at the notes on page 32 again.
Now, look carefully at the notes about a Night in Ramadan in Egypt with your teacher. Make sure that you understand them.

UNIT 4

Write a paragraph about *A Night in Ramadan in Egypt* on page 36. The paragraph which you wrote with your teacher about Syria and the paragraph about Turkey will help you, too.



Night Ramadan Egypt

break fast dates pray.
 go to . . . mosques . . . public places.
 Children coloured lanterns.
 knock at doors houses . . ask
 sweets.
 stay up late . . . most . . . some sleep.
 Just before dawn movement
 heard in houses.
 People getting up eat.

UNIT 4

G

Write your paragraph below.

1. The first step in the process of identifying a species is to determine its morphology. This involves observing the physical characteristics of the organism, such as its size, shape, color, and structure. Morphological data is often used to create a key or a flowchart that helps in the identification process.

2. The second step is to determine the organism's habitat and distribution. This involves observing the environment where the organism lives and the range of its distribution. This information is used to narrow down the list of possible species.

3. The third step is to determine the organism's behavior. This involves observing the organism's actions, such as its feeding habits, its social structure, and its reproductive behavior. This information is used to further narrow down the list of possible species.

4. The fourth step is to determine the organism's genetic makeup. This involves analyzing the organism's DNA or other genetic material. This information is used to identify the organism's closest relatives and to determine its evolutionary history.

5. The fifth step is to determine the organism's phylogenetic relationships. This involves comparing the organism's genetic material to that of other species in the same group. This information is used to determine the organism's position in the tree of life.

6. The sixth step is to determine the organism's ecological role. This involves observing the organism's interactions with its environment and other species. This information is used to determine the organism's impact on its ecosystem.

7. The seventh step is to determine the organism's conservation status. This involves assessing the risk of extinction for the species. This information is used to develop conservation plans and to protect the species from extinction.

8. The eighth step is to determine the organism's economic value. This involves assessing the value of the species to humans, such as its use in medicine, agriculture, or industry. This information is used to develop policies that protect the species and its resources.

9. The ninth step is to determine the organism's cultural significance. This involves assessing the value of the species to a particular culture or community. This information is used to develop policies that protect the species and its cultural heritage.

10. The tenth step is to determine the organism's scientific value. This involves assessing the value of the species to science, such as its use in research or education. This information is used to develop policies that protect the species and its scientific resources.

H

Check the Following:

Title:

11

Indentation:

Full stops:

Capital letters:

1000

(Each sentence)

Figure 1

UNIT 4

1

After your teacher has corrected your paragraph about *A Night in Ramadan in Egypt*, rewrite it correctly below.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or printed text visible on the paper.

Appendix B: Example of unit from FHFSA

1. Students' book (Year one, unit 1)

Unit 1 Life stories

1 A tale of two lives

1 Speaking and reading

- In small groups, look at the photo. Do you know who this is and any other information about him?
- Work in pairs. Student A, read *Early life* about Mark Hanson. Student B, read *Later life* about Hamza Yusuf.
- Student A, ask questions about Hamza Yusuf and complete his profile. Student B, ask questions about Mark Hanson and complete his profile.

Early life

Mark Hanson was born in Walla Walla, Washington, in the USA but when he was young his family moved and he grew up in Northern California. His father worked as an academic and the house was full of books. As a young boy Mark liked the same things that many children do. He played sports, rode around the neighbourhood on his bike and wanted to go to university. But, when he was 17 years old, he was involved in a car accident. This event was to change his life forever.



a profile

Mark Hanson

- Where was he born?
- Where did he grow up?
- What did his father do?
- What did Mark like?
- What happened when he was 17?

LATER LIFE


After the accident in 1977, he converted to the Islamic faith and changed his name to Hamza Yusuf. Then he decided he would study Islam and he spent four years in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. He also lived and studied in West Africa. In 1996, he started the Zaytuna Institute in California where they teach Islamic studies using traditional teaching methods. He is married and has five children – all boys.

Hamza Yusuf

a profile

- 1 Did he become a Muslim?
- 2 What did he decide to do?
- 3 Where did he study?
- 4 What did he do in 1996?
- 5 How many children does he have?

2 Pronunciation: past tense endings

-  a Listen to the pronunciation of these past tense verbs and write them in the appropriate column.

changed-	converted-	decided	involved
liked-	lived	moved	played
studied	wanted	worked	

/d/	/t/	/ɪd/
changed	liked	converted

-  b Listen and check, then practise saying the verbs.

3 Speaking, writing and reading

- a In pairs, talk about your personal history or the history of a member of your family.

I was born in ... I grew up in ...

I went to ... school. I left that school in ... and ...

My grandfather was born in ... He grew up in ...

When he was ... his family moved to ...

He got married when he was ...

While your partner is talking, take notes. Ask questions for clarification or more information.

When were you born? Did he ... ?

- b Use your notes to write a short biography of your partner or your partner's relative.
- c Exchange papers. Read your partner's biography of you or your relative and correct any incorrect information.

Lesson 2 Life stories

2 Unforgettable memories

1 Listening and speaking

- a You are going to hear an Arabian traditional tale. Look at the words in the box. What do you think this story is about?

fierce men mountain door amazing



- b Now listen and answer the questions.

- 1 What was Ali Baba doing when he saw the thieves?
- 2 What were the thieves carrying?
- 3 What was Ali Baba's first reaction?
- 4 What did he do next?
- 5 What did the thieves do next?

- c In pairs, discuss what happened next.

2 Grammar builder: review of past continuous vs past simple

- a Match sentences 1 and 2 with the correct time sequence, a or b. Then answer the question.

- 1 Sami called his father when he saw the robber. a) Sami called his father. Then he saw a robber.
- 2 Sami was calling his father when he saw the robber. b) Sami saw a robber. Then he called his father.

In which sentence was Sami on the telephone to his father when he saw the robber?

- b Complete the story with correct forms of the verbs in brackets.

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

Ali Baba (1) _____ (be) alone. He (2) _____ (tend) the goats quietly and (3) _____ (lead) them across a narrow stony path into a new valley on the other side of the hill. Suddenly, Ali Baba (4) _____ (see) in front of him a large band of men who (5) _____ (gallop) up the path on their horses. The men looked fierce and (6) _____ (carry) cutlasses. When Ali Baba (7) _____ (realize) that the men were thieves, he (8) _____ (feel) very frightened. He (9) _____ (shake) all over but then he (10) _____ (spot) a tall tree next to him which had a large leafy crown. Ali Baba quickly (11) _____ (climb) the tree. From the tree, Ali Baba (12) _____ (watch). The thieves all dismounted their horses. Then the leader of the band (13) _____ (stand) in front of the mountain wall and proclaimed the words, 'Open Sesame'. To Ali Baba's amazement, a door in the wall of the mountain side (14) _____ (open) and the thieves (15) _____ (walk) inside!

3 Writing, reading and speaking

- a Write about an interesting experience in your life. Write the story in three short paragraphs, one for each of these topics:
- the context – anything relevant such as how old you were, whether you were alone or with someone, what you were doing, etc.
 - the event – what happened, how you reacted, what you did, etc.
 - the outcome – how it ended, whether it affected you afterwards, etc.
- b In pairs, exchange and read your stories. Don't comment except to ask for clarification of the stories if necessary.
- c Read your own story again and improve it if you can, e.g. expressing something more clearly, correcting any language mistakes.
- d Put your stories on the wall or the board. Read them all and discuss them. Which is the most memorable story?

Life stories Lesson 2

4 Word builder: *so / too / either / neither*

a Look at the examples.

Affirmative

A: I have a new car.

B: I do, too! / So do I!

A: I liked the meal.

B: I did, too. / So did I.

Negative

A: Joe doesn't work full time.

B: Carl doesn't either. / Neither does Carl.

A: Mark didn't go to the shops.

B: I didn't either. / Neither did I.

1 What are *so*, *too*, *either* and *neither* used to express?

a) similarity b) difference c) surprise

2 What is the word order with *too / either* and with *so / neither*?

3 Which of these four words are used in the affirmative and which in the negative?

Language assistant

I	do / did / am / would / can / etc.	too.
He	doesn't / didn't / isn't / wouldn't / can't / etc.	either.
Neither	does / did / is / would / can / etc.	she.
So	do / did / am / would / can / etc.	I.

b Mary and Sue are meeting for the first time. Complete their conversation using *so*, *too*, *either*, or *neither*.

Mary: Hello. My name's Mary. I'm from Ireland.

Sue: Ah, (1) _____ am I! I'm Sue. Where are you from in Ireland?

Mary: Well, I was born in Cork.

Sue: Really! I was, (2) _____. Did you go to UCC?

Mary: No, I didn't go to university.

Sue: (3) _____ did I. I went to Cork Technical College.

Mary: Ah! So did I. But I didn't graduate from there, I'm afraid.

Sue: Really? I didn't (4) _____.

Mary: I didn't graduate because my mother was ill and I had to look after her. Maybe I'll go back one day. What about you?

Sue: Well ... er ... I failed the exams at the end of my first year.

5 Speaking

a Tick (✓) the things in the table that are true for you.

	You	Friend		You	Friend
I was born in a small town.			I wasn't born in a small town.		
I'm an only child.			I'm not an only child.		
I liked sports at school.			I didn't like sports at school.		
I use the Internet a lot.			I don't use the Internet at all.		

b Now find someone with three or more things the same as you. Write the other student's name next to each item under 'Friend.'

A: I was born in a small town.

B: So was I. I'm not an only child.

A: Neither am I. I ...

Lesson 3 Life stories

3 Now and then

1 Speaking and listening

a Look at the photo of the two men. What do you think they do?

b Read the article and match topics A–D with the paragraphs.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| A Preparing to start a business | _____ |
| B The business today | _____ |
| C The early days of the business | _____ |
| D Jim and Johnny's school days | _____ |

c In pairs, discuss these questions.

- 1 What were Jim and Johnny like at school?
- 2 Why did they choose to open restaurants as their business?
- 3 Why was the café a success?
- 4 How is their business different today?
- 5 How is their business the same?

Cookery Millionaire\$



1 Brothers Jim and Johnny weren't good at school. They weren't interested in maths, science or English, and they didn't use to study enough. They used to play around and preferred going shopping, eating good food and cooking.

2 When Jim and Johnny finished school, they didn't want to go to college. They wanted to work, but most of all they wanted to make money and have fun. Because they both loved cookery, they both got jobs working in restaurants – Jim as a waiter and Johnny in the kitchens. But, after a few months they realized they weren't earning very much money. They decided to set up their own business.

3 To start with they opened a small café selling cheap food. They did so well that, in 1978, they opened their own restaurant, and two years later they had enough money to open a second restaurant in Chicago. After a couple more years, they had a chain of restaurants across the country and their own TV cookery show.

4 Now, apart from their restaurants, they have a range of cookery products, cookery books and a successful TV show. The guys who used to be unsuccessful at school are now millionaires. But some things don't change. The brothers still remember how they got started and they still own the small café where they started their business.

d Do you know anyone who has started their own business? Are they successful? Why/Why not? What business would you like to start?

Life stories Lesson 3

2 Grammar builder: *used to*

a Look at the examples and answer the question.

- 1 What **did** Jim and Johnny **use to** do in school?
- 2 They **used to** play around a lot.

What does *used to* express?

- 1 a) Something in progress at a specific time in the past.
- b) A habitual action or continual state in the past.
- 2 a) Something that has now stopped.
- b) Something that continues in the present.

b Look at the examples again. What are the affirmative, negative and interrogative structures?

1 Affirmative:

subject + _____ + _____.

Example: They *used to* work hard.

2 Negative:

subject + *didn't* + _____ + _____.

Example: _____.

3 Interrogative:

_____ + subject + _____ +
_____?

Example: _____?

c Find two more examples of *used to* in the article about Jim and Johnny. How do you express *used to* in your language?d Complete the sentences with *used to* / *didn't use to* when possible, and when not possible with the past simple.

- Jim and Johnny (1) _____ (be) short of money. Then they (2) _____ (start) their own business in Columbus, Ohio, and now they have millions. They (3) _____ (become) an extraordinary success. They (4) _____ (not worry) much about money. They still don't.

3 Listening and speaking

a Look at the photographs. Describe what the person is using for transport in each one. How does he travel now?



b Now listen to the conversation and check your answer.

c Listen again and tick (✓) the things Andy used to do.

- 1 work in an office ☐
- 2 ride a motorcycle to work ☐
- 3 work six to seven hours ☐
- 4 not like working ☐
- 5 repair motorcycles ☐
- 6 drive a car to work ☐
- 7 work ten hours ☐
- 8 love working ☐

d In pairs, check your answers.

A: Did Andy use to work in an office?

B: Yes, he did. He was an architect.

4 Writing and speaking

a Write three or four sentences about differences in your life today and in the past. Don't write your name.

I used to live in an apartment, but now I live in a house. I didn't use to like school but I love studying now.

b In groups, mix up the papers. Take a paper and read the sentences. The group tries to guess who wrote them.

Lesson 4 Life stories

Saudi Arabia and the World

The oldest man in the world

1 Speaking

Look at the picture. How old is the man? Could he be 70, 80 or older? Why do you think so?

2 Reading

- a Read the text about Nasir al-Hajri and answer the questions below.

According to a newspaper report, a man who was born in Saudi Arabia but now lives in the UAE, is claiming to be the oldest man in the world.

The family of Nasir al-Hajri recently discovered that the age on his UAE identity card was much higher than anyone imagined – not 80 or 90 but an amazing 135.

He is in good health and told the newspaper, through his grandson Mohammed, how he has managed to live so long and stay healthy. He always eats freshly cooked food and practises the Bedouin lifestyle. He wakes up early, drinks camel's milk and eats dates every day.

He was born and brought up in Saudi Arabia and when he was young, he used to be a shepherd. As a soldier, he even took part in a number of battles in the early 1900s.

His life has changed a lot and he is proud that he is not dependent on anybody to survive, although he does live in a house with his eight grandchildren. These days, he does not go out much except to go to the mosque five times a day to pray. But people often visit him to hear Nabati poems, which he loves reciting, and stories from a time long ago.

Mohammed says the family are going to contact the Guinness Book of World Records to record his grandfather as the oldest man in the world.



- 1 Where does Nasir al-Hajri live?
 - 2 How old is he according to the report?
 - 3 How has he managed to stay healthy?
 - 4 What job did he do as a young man?
 - 5 What doesn't Nasir do now that he is old?
 - 6 Where does he go when he goes out?
 - 7 Why do people visit him?
- b In pairs, check your answers to the questions.
- c What do you think of this story?

3 Listening and writing



Listen to two young people, Dima and Asma, talking about their grandfathers. Complete the notes below.



Dima's grandfather

Age: _____

Childhood: difficult _____

Job: _____

Daily activities: _____

Asma's grandfather

Age: _____

Childhood: _____

Job: _____

Daily activities: _____

4 Grammar builder: negative questions

- a Look at the example from the conversation between Asma and Dima and answer the question.

Dima says: *Oh, wasn't he a history teacher?*

How is this different from: *Was he a history teacher?*

- b In pairs, make negative questions to show surprise in the following situations:

- 1 You are surprised that your friend can't do the maths homework.
- 2 You are surprised that your friend has never played football.
- 3 You are surprised that your friend didn't like the food at the restaurant.
- 4 You are surprised that your friend isn't going to the market tomorrow.

Language assistant

We use negative questions when we are surprised about something negative. Here are some examples:

Don't you like bananas? means we are surprised that someone **doesn't** like bananas.

Haven't you been to the new shopping centre? means we are surprised that someone **hasn't** been to the new shopping centre.

5 Writing and speaking

- a Think about older people in your family. They can be grandparents, uncles or aunts, even parents. Write sentences about what they do every day and what they used to do when they were young. You can write about one or two people.
- b Exchange your writing with a partner. Indicate any mistakes (consult your teacher if necessary). Help each other to make corrections.
- c Individually, present your writing as a short talk to the class or a small group. Don't forget to introduce the people first.

2. FHSA Work book (Year One, unit 1)

Unit 1 Life stories

1 A tale of two lives

1 Grammar

a Put the words in the correct order to form questions.

- name / your / is / what / ? What is your name?
- 1 English / you / are / why / studying / ? _____
- 2 sports / favourite / your / are / what / ? _____
- 3 doing / do / you / what / like / free / time / your / in / ? _____
- 4 live / you / do / where / ? _____
- 5 work / student / you / do / or / you / a / are / ? _____

b Answer the questions in exercise 1a with information about yourself.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

2 Writing

a Rashed is spending the summer in the USA. He wants to find a job there. Write the questions to complete the interview.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Interviewer: <u>What is your full name</u> ? | Rashed: Rashed Daoud |
| Interviewer: (1) _____ ? | Rashed: I'm Saudi Arabian. |
| Interviewer: (2) _____ ? | Rashed: 4 May, 1990. |
| Interviewer: (3) _____ ? | Rashed: I was born in Dammam. |
| Interviewer: (4) _____ ? | Rashed: No, I'm single. |
| Interviewer: (5) _____ ? | Rashed: I went to high school in Dammam. |
| Interviewer: (6) _____ ? | Rashed: Yes, I'm at university right now. I'm studying history. |
| Interviewer: (7) _____ ? | Rashed: Yes, I speak some English. I suppose I'm at intermediate level. |

Life stories Lesson 1

b Now complete Rashed's form using the information from the interview.

- 1 Full name: Rashed Daoud
- 2 Nationality: _____
- 3 Date of birth: _____
- 4 Place of birth: _____
- 5 Marital status: _____
- 6 High school: _____
- 7 University: _____
- 8 English level: _____



c What kind of job would be suitable for him?

- working as a waiter ☐
- working in a library ☐
- working as a teacher ☐

d Now complete the form for yourself. What kind of holiday job would be suitable for you?

- 1 Full name: _____
- 2 Nationality: _____
- 3 Date of birth: _____
- 4 Place of birth: _____
- 5 Marital status: _____
- 6 High school: _____
- 7 University: _____
- 8 English level: _____

e Write a paragraph about yourself. Say why you think you are qualified for the job you have chosen.

My name is _____

Lesson 2 Life stories

2 Unforgettable memories

Grammar builder: review of past continuous vs past simple

Use:

Past continuous: to describe continuous activities in the past.

*The sun **was shining**.*

Form:

subject +	was / were +	verb + ing
I / He / She	was	walking down the street.
You / We	were	

Use:

Past simple: to describe events that interrupted longer activities or a series of past events in sequence.

*The sun **was shining** when I **left** the house.*

*I **walked** down the road and **got** into my car.*

1 Grammar

a Circle the correct form: past simple or past continuous.

- I was (studying / studied) in New York when I (met / was meeting) my best friend.
- 1 She (studied / was studying) in the same class when I (saw / was seeing) her for the first time.
- 2 I (spoke / was speaking) to her and (asked / was asking) her where she came from.
- 3 I (introduced / was introducing) myself and (asked / was asking) her if I could sit at her table.
- 4 She (was saying / said) "Poland" – the same as me!

b Complete the paragraph with the correct forms of the verbs in brackets.

It was Saturday morning and Ali (1) _____ (*feel*) rather nervous. It was the day of the tennis final. His parents and Ali (2) _____ (*have*) breakfast when his phone (3) _____ (*ring*). It was his grandmother. 'Play well,' she said. He (4) _____ (*finish*) getting ready and his father (5) _____ (*drive*) him to the tennis court. His opponent (6) _____ (*practise*) already. He (7) _____ (*serve*) to his coach. He (8) _____ (*look*) very good. Ali (9) _____ (*walk*) onto the court in his new white shorts and T-shirt and the match (10) _____ (*begin*). One and a half hours later, it was all over. Ali had won his first tennis tournament. He was ten years old.

c Write about when you first met a friend.

I was _____ (what?) when I met _____ (who?).
 We met in _____ (where / when?). He / She
 _____ and I _____ (clothes).
 I _____ (how the conversation started).

2 Word builder: *so* and *neither*

a Read the information about Paul and Steven. Complete the sentences using *so* or *neither*.

Paul and Steven are twin brothers. They are identical in every way.

Paul can't swim and neither can Steven.

1 Steven works as a waiter

2 Paul doesn't like fish

3 Steven has a car

4 Paul wasn't wearing jeans yesterday

5 Steven would like to be an engineer

b Correct the sentences. There is one mistake in each sentence.

Birds can sing and people can sing either.

Birds can sing and so can people.

1 I'm an only child and is my friend, too.

2 I play tennis every day and so do Peter.

3 I like going to the shopping centre and neither does my mother.

4 George can't drive and Tom can't, too.

5 We'd like to play football and neither would our brothers.

c Make sentences with *so*, *neither*, *either*, or *too* and the words in brackets.

Saudis speak Arabic and so do Egyptians. / and Egyptians do, too. (Egyptians)

1 Australians speak English _____ (Canadians)

2 Policemen wear uniforms _____ (soldiers)

3 I don't like cold weather _____ (my sister)

4 Whales live in the ocean _____ (sharks)

5 Andy can't play tennis _____ (Roger)

Lesson 3 Life stories

3 Now and then

Grammar builder: *used to***Use:**

To describe repeated past habits or states that are now different.

I **used to ride a bike**. (I rode a bike in the past, more than once, but now I don't.)

I **didn't use to like** cheese. (Now I like it.)

Form:**positive**

I					
You			live	in an apartment	
He / She	used to	eat	chicken	but now	you live in a house.
We		work	in the city		he's / she's a vegetarian.
They					we work in the country.

negative

I		
You		
He / She	did not (didn't) use to ...	
We		
They		

interrogative

Did	I	use to ...?
	you	
	he / she	
	we	
	they	

Language assistant

Remember, if the event was just once, use the past simple.

I **used to go there on holiday**. (several times) ✓

I **used to go there on holiday in 1998**. ✗

I **went there on holiday**. (in 1998) ✓

1 Grammar

a Circle the correct form: past simple or *used to*. Sometimes both forms are possible.

- I *used to visit* / visited my grandmother last week.
- I *used to go* / *went* to Italy last year.
 - I *didn't use to like* / *didn't like* cheese and now I like it.
 - When I was young, my parents *used to live* / *lived* in an apartment in Dubai and they still live there now.
 - John *used to have* / *had* a beard when he was younger.
 - That shop *used to sell* / *sold* shoes.
 - She *didn't use to like* / *didn't like* computers but now she does.

b Correct the sentences. There is one mistake in each sentence.

- I usen't to have a car. I didn't use to have a car.
- George and Michael didn't used to be friends. _____
 - Did you used to live in the USA? _____
 - She didn't used to work here. _____
 - What are you use to do when you were a child? _____
 - Jeff used play tennis but now he doesn't. _____

c Say how things have changed. Use *used to* and the words in brackets.

- He's very rich now. (poor)
He used to be poor.
- The climate is much warmer now. (cooler) _____
 - He plays golf really well now. (badly) _____
 - The restaurant is so expensive now. (reasonable) _____
 - Kareem doesn't eat very much now. (more) _____
 - Studying is so interesting now that I'm older. (boring) _____

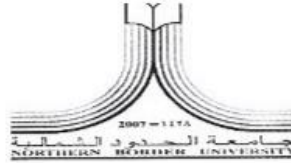


d Complete the conversation with the words in brackets.

- A: (1) _____ (do) when you were a child?
 B: (2) _____ (play / garden). What about you?
 A: (3) _____ (not play / garden).
 (4) _____ (play / park).

Appendix C: The Objectives of Teaching English at The Preparatory Level

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
NORTHERN BORDER UNIVERSITY
DEANSHIP OF PREPARATORY YEAR
& SUPPORTING STUDIES



وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة الحدود الشمالية
عمادة السنة التحضيرية
والدراسات المساندة

(موجز بأهم مخرجات التعلم في المقرر و يجب أن تكون محددة و قابلة للقياس)	Course objectives أهداف المقرر
<p>عند نهاية البرنامج، سيتمكن الطالب من :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - التعبير عن الأمور والقضايا الاجتماعية وتبادل الآراء حول ذلك بمهارة ومهنية عالية وبنقطة تامة. - قراءة نصوص ذات مواضيع متنوعة من خلال تطبيق استراتيجيات القراءة التي سبق له تعلمها والتي تمكنه من التعامل مع النصوص التخصصية. - كتابة نصوص ذات مواضيع متنوعة من فقرات ومقالات والرسائل بأنواعها الرسمية والغير رسمية و الإلكترونية. - الاستفادة مما تعلمه من مهارات خلال المنهاج واستغلال ما تدرب عليه أيضا من استراتيجيات خاصة بالاختبارات لتحقيق نتائج متميزة إذا ما تقدم لاختبارات العالمية كالتوفل والأيلتس. 	

Appendix D: Reading texts at the preparatory level (Top Notch English Series)

about past activities.

Did you exercise last weekend?

CONVERSATION • Ask about a vacation.

1. MODEL. Read and listen.

Brian: You look great. Were you on vacation?
 Naomi: Yes, I was. I just got back last week.
 Brian: Where did you go?
 Naomi: I went to London for two weeks.
 Brian: No kidding. How was it?
 Naomi: Really nice.
 Brian: Well, it's great to see you. Welcome back.
 Naomi: Thanks.

2. Rhythm and intonation practice

3. PAIR WORK. Choose a vacation place. Use the photos or another place. Then role-play the conversation.

A: You look _____. Were you on vacation?
 B: _____. I just got back _____.
 A: Where did you go?
 B: _____.
 A: _____. How was it?
 B: _____.

Continue in your own way ...

Positive and negative descriptions

<p>Really nice. Great. Wonderful.</p>	<p>Not good. Terrible. Awful.</p>
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Rome

London

Rio de Janeiro

Moscow

Hong Kong

Hawaii

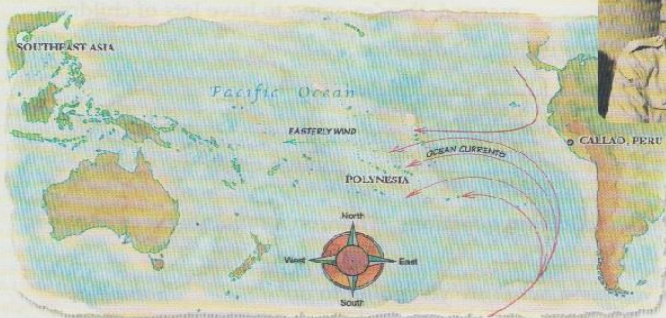
Istanbul

97

TOP NOTCH ACTIVITIES

A **READING.** Read and listen to the article.
Then answer the questions.

Thor Heyerdahl, Explorer



Thor Heyerdahl



The Kon-Tiki

Thor Heyerdahl was born in Norway in 1914. Heyerdahl got married in 1937. He and his wife, Liv, moved to Polynesia that year. While they lived there, Heyerdahl liked to go fishing. When he went fishing, he studied the wind and the Pacific Ocean currents.

In 1947, people thought that the first Polynesians had come from the west, from Southeast Asia. Because of the winds and the ocean currents, Heyerdahl had a different idea.

He thought the first Polynesians had come from the east.

In 1947, Heyerdahl made the Kon-Tiki, a raft of balsa wood. With a crew of men from many countries, he traveled 8000 kilometers [4300 miles] from Callao, Peru, to Polynesia. The voyage of the Kon-Tiki was very difficult. It took 101 days. But it proved that Heyerdahl's idea was possible. Heyerdahl died in 2002.

Information source: *Kon-Tiki: Across the Pacific by Raft* by Thor Heyerdahl (New York: Pocket Books, 1990)

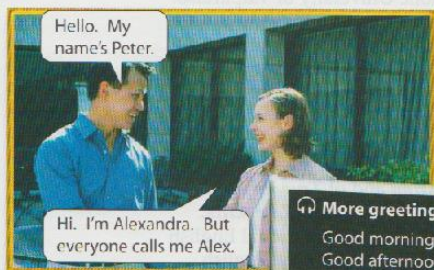
1. What was Heyerdahl's occupation? Thor Heyerdahl was an explorer
2. Where was he from? _____
3. When was he born? _____
4. When did he get married? _____
5. What was his wife's name? _____
6. Where did he move in 1937? _____
7. What did he study? _____
8. Where did he travel to in 1947? _____
9. Challenge: Why did Heyerdahl build the Kon-Tiki? _____

B **WHAT ABOUT YOU?** On a separate piece of paper, write a short history of your life. Include a picture. Then tell your class about it.

I was born in 1980. I grew up in ...

Welcome to *Top Notch!*

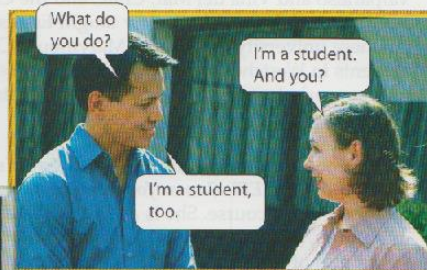
A Read and listen. Then listen again and repeat in the pauses.



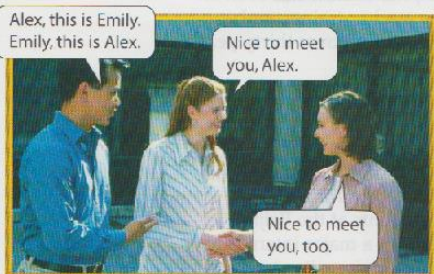
1. Introduce yourself.

More greetings

Good morning.
Good afternoon.
Good evening.



2. Tell someone what you do.



3. Introduce someone.



4. Say good-bye.

More ways to say good-bye

Good-bye.
Take it easy.
Take care.
Good night.

B GROUP WORK.

Get to know your classmates.



Introduce someone to your class.



4

Talk about Small Families and Large Families

LESSON

A READING WARM-UP. Do you come from a small family or a large family?

B READING. Read about large and small families.

Families Come in All Sizes



On November 18, 1997, Bobbi and Kenny McCaughey of the United States were the happy parents of one child—their daughter Mikayla. The next day, they had eight children. Bobbi gave birth to septuplets—three more daughters and four new sons. At first it was very hard. They lived in a very small house and they needed lots of help. Now it is better. They live in a big house and the children help with the housework.

Barry and Julia Rollings of Canberra, Australia started with just two daughters: Alix and Briony. Then, between 1991 and 1998, they adopted six more children—five sons and one daughter. Barry also has four adult children from his first marriage. People always ask them, "How many kids do you have now?" Julia says, "I love my family and my life!" And she adds, "Barry likes housework!"



In traditional Chinese culture, families were very large. But in mainland China today, with a population of over 1,000,000,000 people, the government has a one-child policy: in most places, a family can have only one child. In the future, there will be no aunts, uncles, or cousins. Why? Because there will be no sisters or brothers.

Many people don't agree with the one-child policy. But all agree that one advantage of a small family is that parents have more money for their children.

SOURCE: www.geocities.co/juro/madhouse and www.msnbc.com

C Now read the following statements. Figure out if they are true or false, based on the information in the reading.

- Septuplets are seven children born at the same time.
- Alix and Briony Rollings are twins.
- Julia Rollings is Barry's first wife.
- The traditional Chinese family was a one-child family.

true

false

no information
given☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

LESSON 1

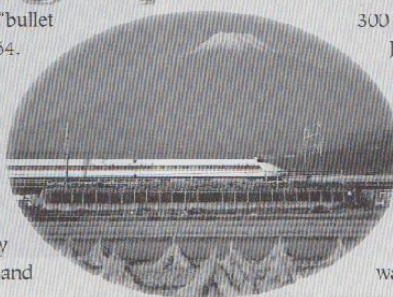
4 Choose the correct response. Circle the letter.

1. "I missed the 7:30. What should I do?"
a. No, I'm sorry. b. You could take the 9:10. c. It left five minutes ago.
2. "The next bus is at 5:50."
a. Is it an express? b. Is it a direct flight? c. One way or round trip?
3. "One way or round trip?"
a. Two tickets, please. b. Yes, please. c. One way.
4. "Oh, no! The train is leaving in three minutes!"
a. No, I'm sorry. b. No, you couldn't. c. We should hurry!

5 Read the article. Choose the correct answer.

Traveling by Bullet

The Japanese Shinkansen, or "bullet trains," began service in 1964. They carried passengers between Tokyo and Osaka. The first trains traveled at 210 km per hour. Today, shinkansen trains on Japan's main island of Honshu connect Tokyo with most of the larger cities. They travel at speeds between 240 and



300 km per hour. In 2007, the Japanese Railway is going to introduce a 350 km-per-hour train. One tip for bullet train travelers: Get to your departure gate on time. Shinkansen trains are almost never late. In 1999, the average lateness per train was twenty-four seconds!

SOURCE: www.jrtr.net

1. A shinkansen is
a. a city in Japan.
b. a train station.
c. a fast Japanese train.
2. Japanese bullet trains are
a. always late.
b. almost always on time.
c. often canceled.

6 Complete each sentence or question. Use could or should and the base form of the verb.

1. Want my advice? _____ the express. _____ the local, but it takes thirty minutes longer.
You / take You / take
2. _____! _____ the 7:30!
You / hurry You / make
3. _____ round-trip tickets. They are cheaper than two one-way tickets, and she won't have to wait in another ticket line.
She / buy
4. _____ an aisle seat in the rear of the plane or a window seat in the front.
We / take
What do you think? What seats _____?
we / take
5. The flight is delayed. _____ late for the meeting. _____ the office?
We / be we / call
6. No, _____ a direct flight. They tried, but all the flights had a stop in Anchorage.
they / not / get


LESSON 4



Read the online articles. Then answer the questions below, according to the information in the articles.


ON A BUDGET?

HERE ARE SOME ALTERNATIVES TO HOTELS




HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT A HOSTEL?

Hostels provide friendly, overnight accommodations for travelers. Hostels are clean, safe, and inexpensive. They usually have great locations—right in the heart of the city, or just outside of town. Most hostels offer fully equipped self-serve kitchens, dining areas, and common rooms for relaxing and socializing with other travelers. Some hostels even have laundry services, libraries, and attentive staff.



A BED & BREAKFAST MIGHT BE FOR YOU.

Bed & Breakfasts, also called "B&Bs," can be a home away from home when you travel. This type of accommodation is usually in a private house and sometimes can offer a great atmosphere. As a guest, you get a clean, cozy room, and, as the name suggests, breakfast is included. B&Bs can be a great deal!



HOW ABOUT CAMPING UNDER THE STARS?

Campgrounds let you spend the night outdoors without spending a lot of money. Many campgrounds are located in beautiful parks filled with incredible nature. Depending on the campground, you can spend a really comfortable night. Most offer showers and running water, and some even offer electricity. Camping is usually the most economical way to spend the night. Plus, you can't beat the views!

Travel Alternatives

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Address www.tips4travel.com

ONLINE

- Which is usually the cheapest type of accommodation? _____
- Which type of accommodation has a kitchen? _____
- Where can you always get breakfast? _____
- Where can you probably use your computer? _____
- Where might you be able to wash clothes? _____
- Where should you stay if you like to meet new people? _____
- Which type of accommodation is best for you if you like hiking and fishing?

3

Explain Local Customs

LESSON

A **READING WARM-UP.** Which gestures do people use in your country?



B **READING.** Read the article about gestures around the world. In your opinion, how are gestures different from speech?

Body Talk!



by Kelly Garbo

To communicate well with people of other countries, you must learn to speak well, right? Yes, but speaking isn't everything. Some experts say only thirty percent of communication comes from talking. Your gestures and other non-verbal actions matter, too.

But in different cultures, the same action can have different meanings. When you have to meet someone from a different culture, be prepared. Do you know what kind of gestures and customs are appropriate?

Let's look at shaking hands. North Americans like a firm handshake. But the French prefer a light, short handshake. If you shake a French person's hand the North American way, he or she may not like it. People in Eastern

SOURCE: www.bellaonline.com

European countries and some Latino cultures prefer shorter handshakes, too. Hugging after shaking hands is also a common introduction there. Don't be surprised if a Brazilian gives you a hug. If you misinterpret gestures of introduction, your friendship may get off on the wrong foot!

Everyone around the world knows the "OK" hand gesture, don't they? But in Spain, parts of South America, and Eastern Europe, the OK sign is considered rude. And if you go shopping in Japan, it means you'd like your change in coins instead of bills. In France, making the OK sign means "zero" or that something is worthless. So check before you use the OK sign to be sure it's OK!

Understanding even a few key gestures from different cultures can make you a better communicator. So next time you travel, try being culturally sensitive. Find out the local gesture and let your body talk.



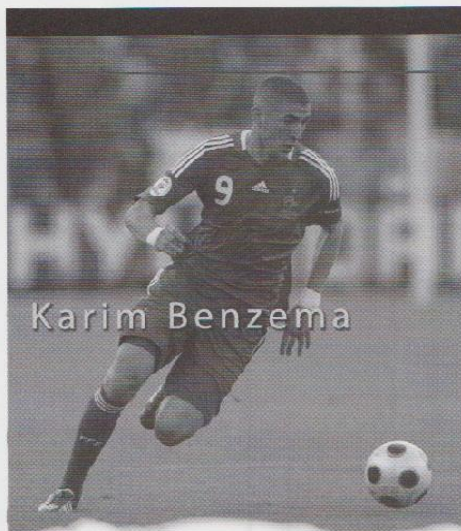
North Americans like a firm handshake.

C **Check the statements that are true, according to Kelly Garbo. Explain why.**

- ☐ 1. Seventy percent of communication comes from non-verbal actions.
- ☐ 2. If you don't speak someone's language, it's always safe to use gestures.
- ☐ 3. French people generally don't like firm handshakes.
- ☐ 4. Brazilians never shake hands.
- ☐ 5. Japanese people think the OK sign is rude.

D **DISCUSSION.** Have you ever been surprised by someone's gestures or non-verbal actions? What was the gesture? What happened?

- D** Read about French soccer star Karim Benzema. Underline all the verbs in the present perfect. Circle all the time expressions with since or for.



Soccer

Karim Benzema

Karim Benzema was born on December 17, 1987. He started playing soccer on the streets of Lyon when he was six. Since then he has become one of the greatest soccer players in the world. Born in Lyon in the central part of France, he joined the Olympique Lyonnais youth team when he was nine. He has lived in Lyon for most of his life. He played his first game for Lyon at age seventeen. Since then he has won many trophies and awards, including the French League, the French Cup, and the French Trophy of Champions. He is handling his success well. Since he turned professional, he has played soccer all over the world and has won over 30 international caps for France.

- E** Complete the interview about Karim Benzema, using the present perfect or the present perfect continuous. Use the present perfect continuous only if the action is continuous or unfinished. Then answer the questions with information from Exercise D.

1. How long / he / play soccer?

Q: _____?

A: _____.

2. How long / he / live in Lyon?

Q: _____?

A: _____.

3. he / win any trophies or awards / since he joined Olympique Lyonnais?

Q: _____?

A: _____.

4. How many international caps / he / win / since he began his career?

Q: _____?

A: _____.

C **SOUND BITES.** Read along silently as you listen to a natural conversation.

MATT: I'm going to get a tattoo.

PAUL: Your parents would let you do that?

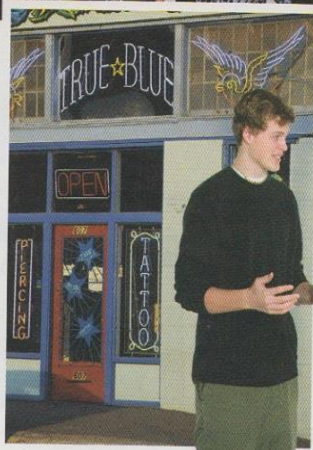
MATT: Are you kidding? If I asked them, they'd just say no.

PAUL: You mean you're not going to tell them?

MATT: I'd have to be nuts to ask them. But, there's nothing wrong with tattoos. Everybody has them.

PAUL: Maybe ... Matt, I hate to say this, but I think you're making a mistake. You should get permission. If you don't, I'm sure you'll be sorry.

MATT: OK. I'll give it some thought.



D **PAIR WORK.** With a partner, find the answers to these questions in the conversation.

1. What mistake does Paul think Matt is making?
2. Why won't Matt ask his parents for permission?
3. Do you agree or disagree with Paul? Explain your answer.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

In your opinion, what should teenagers have to get permission for? Write yes, no, or it depends. Explain.



1. getting a tattoo:



2. using makeup:



3. changing hairstyles:



4. face or body piercing:



5. coming home late:

DISCUSSION. Do teenagers and their parents usually have the same ideas about getting permission? Support your opinion with examples from real life.

3

Talk about How Art Fits in Your Life

LESSON

A READING WARM-UP. Is art an important part of your life?
Do you think artistic talent is genetic?

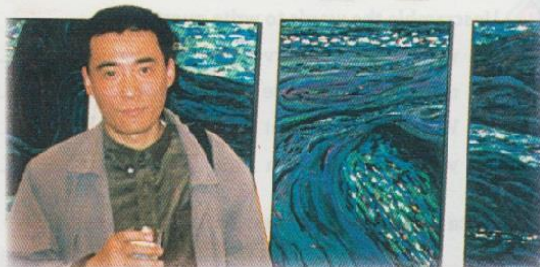
B READING. *Top Notch* interviewed two people about the role of art in their lives.

LIVING WITH ART



In 1982, Lynn Contrucci bought a beautiful piece of jewelry from Mali, in West Africa. She liked the piece so much that she began to study African art in order to understand it better. She was selling her house at the time, and she had some money to spend—so she started to collect African art. Since then, it has become a passion. She has collected nearly 300 pieces, including figures and masks. “I’m an addict now! My family thinks I’m crazy,” she jokes. Even her windows and bed are decorated with beautiful African cloth. Some pieces are given as gifts to family and friends, or they are sold just to make room for more. In 1998, she began to get interested in Chinese jade figures and Tibetan paintings. More recently, she began collecting Haitian paintings. “My home is a mixture of art from all these places,” she says.

Ms. Contrucci says it is like bringing people into her home. “Each piece has a special meaning. They are my friends.”



Yu Gan is an artist from a family of talented artists. He began painting at the age of seven and never stopped. His father, Yu Heng, is known internationally for his dramatic traditional paintings, calligraphy, and poetry. His brother, Yu Ping, is a sculptor and painter. His sister, Yu Fan, is both a pianist and an artist. His wife, Yan Liu, is a fashion design artist, and his son, Kuai—who has shown strong artistic talent since the age of three—wants to be a filmmaker.

Mr. Yu paints in an abstract style that combines, as he puts it, “the best traditions of Western and Eastern art.” Like traditional Chinese artists, he is inspired by images from nature—earth and water.

Like Western artists, he works with oil paint to express his feelings. He hopes to influence young Chinese with his art. “Today, they turn away from all things Chinese and love all things Western. I want them to understand that they can take the best from both worlds.” Mr. Yu has a website at www.eChinaArt.com, which was created to promote art by Chinese artists worldwide.

“I am totally captivated by art,” says Mr. Yu. “I can’t imagine life without it.”



Yu Gan's son, Kuai (above)



Yu Gan's father, (left)

SOURCE: Authentic *Top Notch* interviews

16 WHAT ABOUT YOU? Complete the sentences in your own way.

1. When I left the house this morning, I had already _____.
2. At 12:00 today, I hadn't yet _____.
3. By the time I started to study English, I had already _____, but I hadn't yet _____.

LESSON 3

17 Cross out the word or phrase that has a different meaning from the others.

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1. offensive | very rude | polite |
| 2. customary | not allowed | taboo |
| 3. impolite | nice | rude |
| 4. not usual | traditional | customary |
| 5. etiquette | punctuality | manners |

Did you know . . .

that etiquette and rules for behavior have a very long history? The first instructions for etiquette were written in the year 2400 B.C. by an Egyptian named Ptahhotep. His guide included advice about how to get along with others and how to advance in the world.



SOURCE: www.canoe.ca

18 Read the article about punctuality. Then check **true**, **false**, or **no information**, according to the article.

RIGHT OF TIME

Everyone knows that different cultures have different ideas about punctuality. But one country—Ecuador—is trying something new.

A group called Citizens' Participation has found that being late costs the country about \$724 million each year. They report that more than half of all public events, as

well as many government appointments and social activities, begin late. The group is trying to make people aware of punctuality and reminding them to be on time. The government, including the Ecuadorian president, is supporting the effort.

Hundreds of Ecuadorian organizations and companies have signed agreements to be on time. Posters have been

put up that remind people: "If you're late, someone else is waiting." One newspaper prints a list of government officials who arrive to events late.

The campaign has generally been well-received by the Ecuadorian people and it seems to be working. Many businesses have reported that more meetings are now beginning on time.

SOURCE: www.economist.com

	true	false	no information
1. The country of Ecuador made more money because people were often late.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Citizens' Participation doesn't think punctuality is very important.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The government of Ecuador wants people to be on time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Signs and posters have been made to remind people to be punctual.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Punctuality is more important now in Ecuador than in most other countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Ecuadorians are on time less often than they used to be.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

LESSON 4



Read the article. Then check true or false.

Technology Steps into the World of Fashion

by Jacqueline Roberts

The old saying "beauty is pain" might not be so true anymore.

Welcome a new invention to the fashion world: a high heel that changes into a flat shoe in less than 2 seconds.

The creation is the idea of Ella Kilgour, who studied product design. Before now, Ella had designed toys, furniture, and handbags, but never shoes.

The idea came to her one night after she walked home in a pair of high heels. Her feet hurt badly, so she decided to design a pair of attractive, but comfortable, high heels.

After 9 months of research, Ella created her design. The shoes are made of leather, with a flexible bottom and an aluminum heel. The design is actually pretty low-tech. To change the shoe from high to flat, you just pull the heel down and flip it under the shoe. The heel clicks into place, which led to its name, Declic. In seconds the shoe goes from 10 cm high to 3cm.

Ella agrees that high-heeled shoes are impractical and uncomfortable, but points out that many women like how they look. She says she's giving women what they want: high heels that turn into flat shoes when the party's over.

SOURCE: www.cnn.com

- | | true | false |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Declic was the first shoe Ella designed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Ella's design of Declic was based on a friend's idea. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The design uses new technology. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The shoes are named Declic because of Ella's name. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Declic shoes are not designed to be attractive. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Ella thinks that most high heels are impractical. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



High heels are not a modern invention. They were first introduced in the Middle Ages. At this time, people threw their trash into the streets, making the streets very dirty. So high heels and platform shoes were invented so that people's feet wouldn't touch the trash as they walked.

SOURCE: www.ompersonal.com.ar



Read the article again and answer the questions.

- Before she made her invention, what didn't Ella like about high heels? _____
- How are Ella's shoes different from other high heels? _____
- Do you think most women that you know would be interested in this product? Why or why not? _____

Appendix E: Questionnaires

Questionnaire for Secondary Level: For Final Year Students at Secondary Level

The reading texts at the secondary level

Dear participant,

- This questionnaire aims to gather information about
 - The reading texts at the secondary level
 - The efficacy of the reading texts at the secondary level in preparing the students for preparatory level.
- This questionnaire has been constructed for the purpose of collecting data for my PhD research study **only**, and all the questionnaires' answers will be kept secure and **anonymous**.
- The actual questionnaire has **7** pages and includes 3 sections. The first section deals with background information. The second section concerns your general English reading. The third section related to your English reading at the secondary level.

Instructions

- In this questionnaire, there are no good or bad, right or wrong answers since students differ in their reading abilities and the problems they face in reading.
- The target of this questionnaire is just to know what you actually think about the reading texts you studied to improve your reading (**Not** what the reading texts should be) and what the problems that face you now in reading and why.
- Your participation in this questionnaire is independent from your academic work and will not have any impact on it.
- In most of the questions you are required to choose from a scale 1-5. Please indicate how you feel about the question on this scale.
- Please do not forget to give reasons when asked as they are especially valuable to me and if you want to add more information, please do so in the space below the last question.
- Please use **Arabic** language only.

I really appreciate your co-operation 😊

Questionnaire for Secondary Students

Section one: Participant's Background

1. School:

2. Have you ever visited an English speaking country?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes:

a. Please, name the country or countries you have visited.....

.....

b. How many times have you visited these countries?.....

c. How long have been in each visit?.....

.....

3. Have you ever studied English in a private school or institute?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes:

a. Please, say how long you have studied in that private school or institute?.....

.....

4. Where are you planning to go after finishing your secondary school?

.....

Section two: Your English reading in general

1. To what extent do you like reading in English?

Very much

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

why?.....
.....
.....

2. Do you read in English outside the classroom materials (e.g. English magazines, newspaper, websites.....)?

Very much

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

If you do some such reading (your answer is not 1):

- a. Please, say what are you reading at the moment?.....
.....

- b. How many hours on average do you spend in reading English apart from your textbooks per week?.....

- c. Why do you read outside your textbooks?.....
.....

If in question 6 you chose 1, then please answer the following, otherwise go to question 7

- d. Why do you not read English apart from your textbooks?
.....

3. Do you face difficulties in reading out of class?

Very much

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

If you face some difficulties please explain.....
.....
.....

Section Three: Your English reading in the secondary level

Part One: Difficulties in reading at the secondary level (over the whole three years)

1. To what extent do you find the English reading texts at the secondary level are understandable?

Very difficult to understand

Very easy to understand

1 2 3 4 5

If you find English reading text in the secondary difficult, please say in what way.....

.....
.....
.....

2. To what extent do you think that the topics of the English reading texts at the secondary level are difficult?

Very difficult

Not at all difficult

1 2 3 4 5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....
.....
.....

3. To what extent do you think that the vocabulary in the reading texts at the secondary level is difficult?

Very difficult

Not at all difficult

1 2 3 4 5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....
.....
.....

4. To what extent do you think that the English structures (i.e. grammar) in the reading texts at the secondary level are difficult?

Very difficult

Not at all difficult

1 2 3 4 5

Give reasons for your answer

.....

.....

.....

5. To what extent do you think the length of the sentence hinders your English reading comprehension at the secondary level?

Hinders a lot

Not hinder

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

6. To what extent do you think that the types of the reading texts (e.g. expository, or narrative texts) at the secondary level are difficult?

Very difficult

Not at all difficult

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer

.....

.....

.....

Please note

- If you are not planning to go to the university, please go to question 9 directly in the part two.

Part two: The preparation of the reading texts secondary level for the preparatory level

*Please note that I do understand that you might have no idea about how the English reading texts in the preparatory level look like, **BUT** please give your feeling and to what extent do think the reading texts at the secondary level have prepared you to the preparatory level.*

1. In general, do you think that the English reading texts at the secondary level will prepare you for the sort of reading you would do at the preparatory year at the university?

A lot				Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

Give reasons for your answer.....

2. To what extent do you think that the topics of the reading texts at the secondary level prepare you for the sort of reading you will do in the preparatory level?

A lot				Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

Give reasons for your answer.....

3. To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the secondary level will develop your general English vocabulary, so that you can understand the sort of reading you will do at the preparatory year?

A lot				Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

Give reasons for your answer.....

4. To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the secondary level will develop your academic vocabulary (i.e. that are commonly used in academic context such as analysis), so that you can understand the sort of reading you will do at the preparatory year?

A lot
1 2 3 4 Not at all
5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....
.....
.....

5. To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the secondary level will develop your knowledge of English structure (e.g. grammar) so that you can understand the sort of reading you will do at the preparatory year?

A lot
1 2 3 4 Not at all
5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....
.....
.....

6. To what extent do you think that the reading texts in at the secondary level will develop your awareness of various types of text structure (e.g. expository...) so that you can understand the sort of reading you will do in the first year?

A lot
1 2 3 4 Not at all
5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....
.....
.....

7. To what extent do think the reading texts that you were exposed to at secondary level will prepare you to deal with the sentences of a length that they have to read at the preparatory level?

A lot
1 2 3 4 Not at all
5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

8. To what extent do think the reading texts that you were exposed to at secondary level will prepare you to deal with long texts that they have to read at the preparatory level?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

9. Please use this space below to give any additional information that you think might help me, related to the topic of reading English.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you

Questionnaire for Preparatory level

Research Title: The reading texts at the preparatory level

Dear participant,

- This questionnaire aims to gather information about:
 - The students reading at the preparatory level.
 - The efficiency of the reading texts at the secondary level in preparing the students to the reading at the preparatory level.
 - Finally, the efficiency of the reading texts at the preparatory level for preparing the students for the first year university level.
- This questionnaire has been constructed for the purpose of collecting data for my PhD research study **only**, and all the questionnaires' answers will be kept secure and **anonymous**.
- The actual questionnaire has **9** pages and includes 3 sections. The first section deals with background information. The second section concerns general English reading. The third section relates to your English reading at the preparatory level.

Instructions

- In this questionnaire, there are no good or bad, right or wrong answers since students differ in their reading abilities and the problems they face in reading.
- The target of this questionnaire is just to know what you actually think about the reading texts you studied to improve your reading (**Not** what the reading texts should be) and what the problems that face you now in reading and why.
- Your participation in this questionnaire is independent from your academic work and will not have any impact on it.
- In most of the questions you are required to choose from a scale 1-5. Please indicate how you feel about the question on this scale.
- Please do not forget to give reasons when asked as they are especially valuable to me and if you want to add more information, please do so in the space below the last question.
- **Please use Arabic language only.**

I really appreciate your co-operation ☺

Section One: Participant's Background

1- Major:

2- College and Department:

3- Do you attend English classes at the university?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes:

a. What type of English course are you currently attending? Tick as many as apply

☐ General English.

☐ English for specific purpose (e.g. English for engineering)

b. How many hours per week of English classes do you take?.....hours

c. How many hours are taking this term in all, including the English classes and other classes? hours.

4- How many years have you been learning English, including studying at school?..... Years

5- Where did you study your secondary stage? ☐ Private ☐ Public. Specify.....

.....

6- Have you ever visited an English speaking country?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes:

a. Please, name the country or countries you have visited.....

.....

b. How many times have you visited these countries?.....

.....

c. How long have been in each visit?.....

.....

7- Have you ever studied English in English institute?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes:

a. Please, say how long you have studied in that English institute.

8- Do you think you will study some English medium modules next year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Section two: Your English reading in general

1- To what extent do you like reading in English

Very much

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Why?.....

2- Do you read in English outside the classroom material other than your textbooks (e.g. English magazines, newspaper, websites.....)?

Very much

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

If you do some such reading:

a. Please, say what are you reading at the moment?

b. How many hours on average do you spend in reading English apart from your textbooks per week?

c. Why do you read outside your textbooks?

If in question 2 you choose 1, then please answer the following question, otherwise go to question 3.

a. Why you do not read English apart from your textbooks?.....

3- Do you face difficulties in reading out of class?

Very much

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

If you face some difficulties, please explain.....

4- Do think that you are going to study your subjects in English next year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Section Three: Your English reading at the Preparatory level classes

Part One: Difficulties in reading at the preparatory level

- 1- To what extent do you find the reading texts at the preparatory level are understandable?

Very difficult to understand

Very easy to understand

1

2

3

4

5

If you find reading text at the preparatory level is difficult, please say in what ways.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2- To what extent do face difficulties in understanding the topics in the reading texts at the preparatory level?

Very difficult

Not at all difficult

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

- 3- To what extent do face difficulties in understanding the vocabulary in your reading at the preparatory level?

Very difficult

Not at all difficult

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

- 4- To what extent do face difficulties in understanding the English structures (e.g. grammar) in the reading texts at the preparatory level?

Very difficult

Not at all difficult

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

- 5- To what extent do you think the length of the sentence hinder your English reading comprehension at the preparatory level reading?

Hinder a lot

Not hinder

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 6- To what extent do face difficulties in understanding the range of the types of texts (e.g. expository, narrative) in the reading texts at the preparatory level?

Very difficult

Not at all difficult

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

Part Two: The preparation of secondary reading texts to the preparatory level reading

- 1- In general, do you think that the English reading texts which you read at the secondary level prepared you for the sort of reading you do now at the preparatory level?

A lot

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 2- To what extent do you think that the topics of the reading texts at the secondary level are relevant to reading texts at the preparatory level?

Very relevant

Not relevant at all

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 3- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the secondary level developed your general English vocabulary so that you can understand the reading texts at the preparatory level?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 4- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the secondary level developed your academic vocabulary (i.e. that are commonly used in academic context such as analysis) so that you can understand the reading texts at the preparatory level year?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

- 5- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the secondary level developed your awareness of the English structure (e.g. grammar) so that you can understand the reading texts at the preparatory level?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

- 6- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the secondary level developed your awareness to various types of text (e.g. expository, and narrative) so that you can understand the reading texts at the preparatory level?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

7- To what extent do think the reading texts at secondary level have prepared you to deal with the length of sentences that they have to read at the preparatory level?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

8- To what extent do think the reading texts that at secondary level have prepared you to deal with long texts that they have to read at the preparatory level?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

Please note

- If you are not planning to go to the university, please go to question 9 directly in part three.

Part Three: How reading texts at the preparatory level will prepare you to the reading at first year university level

*Please note that I do understand that you might have no idea about how the English reading texts in the first year look like, **BUT** please give your feeling and to what extent do think the reading texts in the preparatory level have prepared you to the first year reading.*

- 1- In general, do you think that the English reading texts at the preparatory level will prepare you for the sort of reading you do in the first year?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 2- To what extent do you think that the topics of the reading texts at the preparatory level will prepare you for the sort of reading you do in the first year?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 3- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory level will develop your general English vocabulary, so that you can understand the sort of reading you will do in the first year?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

- 4- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory level will develop your academic vocabulary (i.e. that are commonly used in academic context such as analysis) so that you can understand the sort of reading you will do in the first year?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 5- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory level will develop your awareness of the English structure (e.g. grammar) so that you can understand the sort of reading you will do in the first year?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 6- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory level will develop your awareness to various types of text (e.g. expository text and narrative texts) so that you can understand the sort of reading you will do in the first year?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 7- To what extent do think the reading texts at preparatory level will prepare you to deal with the length of sentences that they may have to read at the first year university level?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

8- To what extent do think the reading texts at preparatory level will prepare you to deal with long texts that they may have to read at the first year university level?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

9- Please use the space below to give any additional information that related to the topic.

.....

Thank you

Questionnaire for First Year University Students

Research Title: The reading at the first year university level

Dear participant,

- This questionnaire aims to gather information about:
 - The reading at the first year university level.
 - The efficiency of the reading texts that Saudi students are exposed to at the preparatory level in preparing for first year university reading.
- This questionnaire has been constructed for the purpose of collecting data for my PhD research study **only**, and all the questionnaires' answers will be kept secure and **anonymous**.
- The actual questionnaire has **7** pages and includes **3** sections. The first section deals with background information. The second section concerns English reading. The third section relates to your reading in first year English subjects.

Instructions

- In this questionnaire, there are no good or bad, right or wrong answers since students differ in their reading abilities and the problems they face in reading.
- The target of this questionnaire is just to know what you actually think about the reading texts you studied to improve your reading (**Not** what the reading texts should be) and what the problems that face you now in reading and why.
- Your participation in this questionnaire is independent from your academic work and will not have any impact on it.
- In most of the questions you are required to choose from a scale 1-5. Please indicate how you feel about the question on this scale.
- Please do not forget to give reasons when asked as they are especially valuable to me and if you want to add more information, please do so in the space below the last question.
- **Please use Arabic language only.**

I really appreciate your co-operation ☺

Section one: Participant's Background

- 1- Major:
- 2- College and department:
- 3- Have you attended English classes during the first year?
☐ Yes (**please give details below**) ☐ No (**go to question 4**)

If yes:

- a. Are they optional or obligatory?.....
- b. If optional, Why do you attend?.....
- c. What type of English course are you currently attending? Tick as many as apply
☐ General English ☐ English for specific purpose (e.g. English for Engineering)
- d. How many hours of English classes do you take per week?.....hours.

- 4- How many years have you been learning English, including studying at schools?.....years.
- 5- Where did you study your secondary school? ☐ Private ☐ Public. Specify?

- 6- Have you ever visited an English speaking country?
☐ Yes (**please give details below**) ☐ No (**go to question 8**)

If yes:

- a. Please, name the country or countries you have visited.....
- b. How many times have you visited these countries?.....
- c. How long have been in each visit?.....

- 7- Have you ever studied English in a private school or institute?
☐ Yes (**please give details below**) ☐ No (**go to question 9**)

If yes:

- a. Please, say how long have you studied in that private school or institute.
- 8- How many English medium modules are you studying this year?modules.
- 9- How many hours per week do you study English medium modules this year?..... hours.
- 10- How many hours are taking this term in total?.....hours.

Section two: Your English reading in general

1- To what extent do you like reading in English?

Very much					Not at all
1	2	3	4	5	

why?.....

2- Do you read in English outside the classroom materials (e.g. English magazines, newspaper, websites.....)?

Very much					Not at all
1	2	3	4	5	

If you do some such reading:

- a. Please, say what are you reading at the moment?

- b. How many hours on average do you spend in reading English apart from your textbooks per week?.....
- c. Why do you read outside your textbooks?.....

If in question 12 you choose 1, then please answer the following question, otherwise go to question 13

- d. Why do you not read English apart from your textbooks?.....

3- Do you face difficulties in reading out of class?

Very much					Not at all
1	2	3	4	5	

If you face some difficulties, please explain.....

Section Three: Your English reading in the University First year

Part One: Difficulties in reading in the first year

1- To what extent do you find English reading materials in the first year are understandable?
 Very difficult to understand Very easy to understand

1 2 3 4 5

If you find reading texts at the preparatory level is difficult, please say in what ways.....

.....

.....

.....

2- To what extent do you face difficulties in understanding the topics of what you read in the first year?

Very difficult Not at all difficult
 1 2 3 4 5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

3- To what extent do face difficulties in understanding the vocabulary in your reading in the first year?

Very difficult Not at all difficult
 1 2 3 4 5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

4- To what extent do face difficulties in understanding the English structures (e.g. grammar) in your reading in the first year?

Very difficult Not at all difficult
 1 2 3 4 5

Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

- 5- To what extent do you think the length of the sentence hinders your English reading comprehension in the first year reading?

Hinders a lot

Not hinder

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 6- To what extent do face difficulties in understanding the range of the types of texts (e.g. expository, narrative) in your reading in the first year?

Very difficult

Not at all difficult

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

Part Two: The preparation of the preparatory reading for the first year university level reading

- 1- In general, do you think that the English reading texts which you read at the preparatory level prepared you for the sort of reading you do now in the first year?

A lot

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....
.....
.....

- 2- To what extent do you think that the topics of the reading texts at the preparatory level prepared you to the sort of reading you do now in first year?

Very relevant

Not relevant at all

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....
.....
.....

- 3- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory year developed your general English vocabulary so that you can understand what you read in the first year?

A lot

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....
.....
.....

- 4- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory level developed your academic vocabulary (i.e. that is commonly used in academic context such as analysis) so that you can understand what you read in the first year?

A lot

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....
.....
.....

- 5- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory level developed your technical vocabulary (i.e. specialized terminology in your field) so that you can understand what you read in the first year?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 6- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory level developed your knowledge of the English structures (i.e. Grammar) so that you can understand what you read in the first year?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 7- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory level developed your knowledge of various types of text (e.g. expository and narrative) so that you can understand those that you meet in the first year?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

- 8- To what extent do think the reading texts at preparatory level prepared you to deal with the length of sentences that they have to read at the first year university level?

A lot

1

2

3

4

Not at all

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

9- To what extent do think the reading texts at preparatory level prepared you to deal with the long texts that they have to read at the first year university level?

A lot

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

Give reasons for your answer.....

10- Please use this space below to give any additional information that might help me related to the topic of English reading.

.....

Thank you

إستبانه لطلاب الصف الثالث ثانوي

قطع القراءة في منهج اللغة الانجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية

عزيزي الطالب,

تهدف هذه الإستبانه الى جمع بيانات تتعلق في محورين اساسيين:

أولاً: الصعوبات التي تواجه الطلاب في قراءة نصوص القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية.

ثانياً: مدى فاعلية نصوص القراءة في منهج اللغة الانجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية في تطوير قدرات القراءة لدى الطلاب و تأهيلهم لمواصلة دراستهم للمرحلة الجامعية.

صممت هذه الاستبانه لغرض جمع البيانات لبحثي المقدم لدرجة الدكتوراه فقط, علماً بأن محتويات هذه الإستبانه بعد تفضلكم بتعبأتها سوف تستخدم لغرض الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه فقط, و سوف تظل المحتويات مجهولة المصدر, أقدر لكم كثيراً تعاونكم في المشاركة في البحث مع الرجاء مراعاة الملاحظات التالية عند اكتمال الاستبانه :

- الإستبانه الفعلية عبارة على 7 صفحات.
- تتضمن هذه الإستبانه على ثلاثة أقسام, كل قسم منها يتناول جانباً معيناً.
- يرجى ملاحظة انه لا توجد إجابات خاطئة او صائبة في جميع فقرات هذه الإستبانه و إن الطلاب يختلفون في قدراتهم و آرائهم. و بعبارة اخرى, انا حقا أود أن أتعرف هنا على ما تعتقد به تجاه قطع القراءة التي درستها و ما هي الصعوبات التي تواجهك و ليس ما ينبغي عمله, او ما تريد أن تعمله.
- الرجاء قراءة كل فقرة بتأني مع ذكر الأسباب لتوضح إجابتك.
- أغلب الأسئلة المقدمة في هذه الإستبانه تتيح لك الإختيار من الرقم (1) وحتى الرقم (5) الرجاء اختيار الرقم المناسب حسب ما تعتقد.
- الرجاء الاجابة باللغة العربية فقط.

أقدر لك تعاونك في المشاركة في تعبئة هذا الاستبيان.

القسم الأول : بيانات الطالب

1- المدرسة :

2- هل سبق لك أن زرت دولة تتحدث اللغة الانجليزية ؟

☐ لا

☐ نعم

إذا كانت الأجابه بنعم :

أ- اذكر اسم الدولة أو الدول

ب- كم مرة زرت هذه الدولة أو الدول؟

ج- كم المدة التي قضيتها في هذه الدولة أو الدول ؟

3- هل سبق لك و أن درست في مدرسة خاصة أو معهد (خاص بتدريس اللغة الانجليزية)؟

☐ لا

☐ نعم

إذا كانت الأجابه بنعم :

أ- كم المدة التي قضيتها في هذه المدرسة أو المعهد؟

4- هل تخطط في الإلتحاق بالجامعة بعد الإنتهاء من المرحلة الثانوية؟

القسم الثاني : قراءتك في اللغة الانجليزية بشكل عام

1- إلى أي مدى تحب القراءة باللغة الانجليزية؟

أحب كثيراً 1 2 3 4 5 لا أحب
لماذا؟

2- هل تقرأ في اللغة الانجليزية غير مناهج الدراسة (مثل مجلات و جرائد انجليزيه , مواقع انترنت انجليزية)

كثيراً 1 2 3 4 5 لا أبداً

إذا كانت الإجابة غير الرقم (1) :

- اذكر ما تقرأه الآن؟
- كم معدل الوقت الذي تقضيه في قراءة اللغة الانجليزية (تقريباً)؟
- لماذا تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية خارج المناهج الدراسية؟

إذا كنت قد اخترت الرقم (1) في السؤال رقم 2 , فضلاً اجب على السؤال التالي. أما إذا كنت قد اخترت غير الرقم (1) ارجوا الانتقال الى السؤال رقم 4.

3- لماذا لا تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية ؟

4- هل تواجه صعوبة في القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية خارج المناهج الدراسية؟

كثيراً 1 2 3 4 5 لا أبداً
إذا كنت تواجه صعوبات اذكرها

القسم الثالث: القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية

الجزء الأول: صعوبة القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية (كل السنوات الثلاث في المرحلة الثانوية)

1. إلى أي مدى تجد قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية مفهومة ؟

مفهومة جداً	1	2	3	4	5	صعبة جداً
إذا كنت تجد قطع القراءة صعبه الفهم, حدد أين تكمن الصعوبة						
.....						
.....						

2. إلى أي مدى تجد مواضيع قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية صعبة؟

سهلة جداً	1	2	3	4	5	صعبة جداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
.....						
.....						

3. إلى أي مدى تجد الكلمات في قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية صعبة؟

سهلة جداً	1	2	3	4	5	صعبة جداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
.....						
.....						

4. إلى أي مدى تجد تركيبية الجملة (القواعد) في قطع القراءة صعبة في المرحلة الثانوية؟

سهلة جداً	1	2	3	4	5	صعبة جداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
.....						
.....						

5. إلى أي مدى تعتقد ان طول الجملة في قطع القراءة تعيق من فهمك للقطعة في المرحلة الثانوية؟

لا تعيق ابداً	1	2	3	4	5	تعيق جداً
اذكر الأسباب:						

.....

6. الى اي مدى تواجه صعوبة في فهم انواع مختلفة من قطع القراءة باللغة الانجليزية (قصص, علمية) في المرحلة الثانوية؟

سهلة جداً 1 2 3 4 5 صعبة جداً

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....

عزيزي الطالب،

إذا كنت لا تنوي متابعة دراستك في الجامعة, فضلاً انتقل للسؤال رقم 9 من الجزء الثاني, اما إذا كنت تنوي

الجزء الثاني: مدى تحضير قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية للسنة التحضيرية.

عزيزي الطالب نحن نقدر أنك ربما ليس لديك أي فكره عن قطع القراءة في مرحلة السنة التحضيرية ولكن اجابتك عن الأسئلة التالية مهمة بالنسبة لنا وذلك بناء على ما تعتقد إلى أي مدى قطع القراءة في كتب اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية سوف تأهلك لمرحلة السنة التحضيرية.

1. بشكل عام، إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية سوف تأهلك إلى قطع القراءة التي سوف تواجهك في مرحلة السنة التحضيرية

تؤهل جيداً 1 2 3 4 5 لا تؤهل أبداً

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....

.....

.....

2. إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن مواضيع قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية أهلتك إلى المواضيع التي سوف تواجهك في مرحلة السنة التحضيرية

تؤهل جيداً 1 2 3 4 5 لا تؤهل أبداً

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....

.....

.....

3. إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية طورت مستوى الكلمات العامة لديك، إلى مرحلة أنك تستطيع فهم قطع القراءة التي سوف تواجهك في مرحلة السنة التحضيرية

تؤهل جيداً 1 2 3 4 5 لا تؤهل أبداً

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....

.....

.....

4. إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية طورت مستوى الكلمات الأكاديمية (الكلمات التي تستخدم بكثرة في الوسط الأكاديمي) لديك، إلى مرحلة أنك تستطيع فهم قطع القراءة التي سوف تواجهك في مرحلة السنة التحضيرية

تؤهل جيداً 1 2 3 4 5 لا تؤهل أبداً

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....

.....

.....

5. إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية طورت لديك فهم قواعد اللغة الانجليزية , إلى مرحلة أنك تستطيع فهم قطع القراءة التي سوف تواجهك في مرحلة السنة التحضيرية

تؤهل جيداً لا تؤهل أبداً

1 2 3 4 5

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....
.....
.....

6. إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية طورت لديك فهم أنواع قطع القراءة (قصصية , أو علمية) , إلى مرحلة أنك تستطيع فهم قطع القراءة التي سوف تواجهك في مرحلة السنة التحضيرية

تؤهل جيداً لا تؤهل أبداً

1 2 3 4 5

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....
.....
.....

7. إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية تساعدك على الفهم و التعامل مع الجملة الطويلة التي ربما ستواجهك في مرحلة السنة التحضيرية

تؤهل جيداً لا تؤهل أبداً

1 2 3 4 5

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....
.....
.....

8. الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية قد اعدتك لفهم القطع الطويلة التي ربما ستواجهك في السنة التحضيرية؟

تؤهل جيداً لا تؤهل أبداً

1 2 3 4 5

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....
.....
.....

9. إذا كان لديك أي معلومات اضافية , اكتبها هنا من فضلك:

.....
.....

أشكر واقدر لك حسن تعاونك و أتمنى لك دوام التوفيق والسدد

إستبانة لطلاب مرحلة السنة التحضيرية

مدى فاعليه قطع القراءة في منهج اللغة الانجليزيه للمرحلة الثانوية و التحضيرية لتأهيل الطلاب لقراءة نصوص اللغة الانجليزية في مراحلهم التعليمية

عزيزي الطالب,

تهدف هذه الإستبانة الى جمع بيانات تتعلق في محورين اساسيين:

أولاً: الصعوبات التي تواجه الطلاب في قراءة نصوص القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في مرحلة السنة التحضيرية.

ثانياً: مدى فاعلية نصوص القراءة في منهج اللغة الانجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية في تطوير قدرات القراءة لدى الطلاب و تأهيلهم لقراءة نصوص اللغة الانجليزية في مرحلة السنة التحضيرية.

ثالثاً: مدى فعالية نصوص القراءة في منهج اللغة الانجليزية لمرحلة السنة التحضيرية في تطوير قدرات القراءة لدى الطلاب و تأهيل الطلاب لقراءة نصوص اللغة الانجليزية في مرحلة السنة الاولى الجامعية.

صممت هذه الاستبانة لغرض جمع البيانات لبحثي المقدم لدرجة الدكتوراه فقط، علماً بأن محتويات هذه الاستبانة بعد تفضلكم بتعبأتها سوف تستخدم لغرض الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه فقط، و سوف تظل المحتويات مجهولة المصدر، أقدر لكم كثيراً تعاونكم في المشاركة في البحث مع الرجاء بمراعاة الملاحظات التالية عند اكمال الاستبانة :

- الإستبانة الفعلية عبارة على 8 صفحات.
 - تتضمن هذه الإستبانة على ثلاثة أقسام، كل قسم منها يتناول جانباً معيناً.
 - يرجى ملاحظة انه لا توجد إجابات خاطئة او صائبة في جميع فقرات هذه الإستبانة و إن الطلاب يختلفون في قدراتهم و أرائهم. و بعبارة اخرى، انا حقا أود أن أتعرف هنا على ما تعتقد به تجاه قطع القراءة التي قمت بدراستها سابقاً و الحالية و كذلك ما هي الصعوبات التي تواجهك عند قراءة النصوص الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية و ليس ما ينبغي عمله، او ما تريد أن تعمله.
 - الرجاء قراءة كل فقره بتأني مع ذكر الأسباب لتوضيح إجابتك.
 - أغلب الأسئلة المقدمة في هذه الإستبانة تتيح لك الإختيار من الرقم (1) وحتى الرقم (5) الرجاء اختيار الرقم المناسب حسب ما تعتقد.
 - الرجاء الاجابه باللغة العربية فقط.
- اقدر لك تعاونك في المشاركة في تعبئة هذه الاستبانة.

القسم الأول: بيانات الطالب

- 1- التخصص:
- 2- اسم الكلية والقسم:
- 3- هل تدرس اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية؟
☐ نعم ☐ لا
- إذا كانت الاجابة بنعم:
 أ- ما نوع منهج اللغة الانجليزية الذي تدرسه؟ (تستطيع اختيار اكثر من اجابة)
☐ لغة انجليزية عامه ☐ لغة انجليزية متخصصة (مثل لغة انجليزية متخصصة في الهندسة)
 ب- كم عدد الساعات التي تدرس فيها اللغة الانجليزية في الاسبوع؟ ساعة
 ج- كم عدد الساعات المخصصة في جدولك لهذا الترم متضمنه اللغة الانجليزية؟ ساعة.
 4- كم عدد السنوات التي درست فيها اللغة الانجليزية متضمنة السنوات الدراسية في التعليم العام؟ سنة.
 5- اين درست المرحلة الثانوية؟
☐ مدرسة حكومية ☐ مدرسة خاصة حدد اسم المدرسة:
- 6- هل سبق زرت دولة لغتها الرسمية اللغة الانجليزية؟
☐ نعم ☐ لا
 إذا كانت الاجابة بنعم:
 أ- ما اسم الدولة- الدول التي زرتها؟
 ب- كم مرة زرت هذه الدولة او الدول؟
 ج- كم المدة التي قضيتها في كل زيارة؟
 7- هل سبق لك الدراسة في معهد لتدريس اللغة الانجليزية؟
☐ نعم ☐ لا
 إذا كانت الاجابة بنعم :
 أ- كم المدة التي قضيتها في الدراسة في هذا المعهد؟
 8- هل تعتقد انك سوف تدرس في السنة القادمة مناهجك باللغة الانجليزية؟
☐ نعم ☐ لا

القسم الثاني: قراءتك باللغة الانجليزية بشكل عام

1- هل تحب القراءة باللغة الانجليزية؟

كثيراً 1 2 3 4 5 لا أبداً
لماذا؟

2- هل تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية غير مناهجك الدراسية؟ (مثلاً مجلات, صحف انجليزية, مواقع انترنت انجليزية)

كثيراً 1 2 3 4 5 لا أبداً

إذا كانت الأجوبة غير الرقم (1) فضلاً أكمل الإجابة على الفقرات التالية:

- أ- ماذا تقرأ في الوقت الحالي؟
.....
.....
ب- كم معدل ما تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية في الاسبوع؟
ج- لماذا تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية غير مناهجك الدراسية؟
.....
.....

إذا كنت قد اخترت الرقم (1) في السؤال رقم 2, فضلاً اجب على الفقرة التالية. أما إذا كنت قد اخترت غير الرقم (1) ، فضلاً انتقل للسؤال رقم (3)

د- لماذا لا تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية غير مناهجك الدراسية؟

.....
.....
.....

3- هل تواجه صعوبات في القراءة باللغة الانجليزية في غير مناهجك الدراسية؟

كثيراً 1 2 3 4 5 لا أبداً
إذا كنت تواجه صعوبات اذكرها

.....
.....

4- هل تعتقد انك ستدرس مواد تكون لغتها اللغة الانجليزية في السنة القادمة؟

نعم ☐ لا ☐

القسم الثالث: قراءتك باللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية

الجزء الأول: صعوبات القراءة في السنة التحضيرية.

1- الى اي مدى تجد قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية مفهوماً لديك؟

مفهوم جداً	1	2	3	4	5	صعب جداً
إذا كنت تجد قطع القراءة صعبة الفهم, حدد أين تكمن الصعوبة.						
.....						
.....						
.....						

2- الى اي مدى تواجه صعوبة في مواضيع قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية؟

سهلة جداً	1	2	3	4	5	صعبة جداً
وضح اجابتك بذكر الاسباب.						
.....						
.....						
.....						

3- الى اي مدى تواجه صعوبة في فهم الكلمات في قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية؟

سهلة جداً	1	2	3	4	5	صعبة جداً
وضح اجابتك بذكر الاسباب.						
.....						
.....						
.....						

4- الى اي مدى تواجه صعوبة في فهم قواعد اللغة الانجليزية في قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية؟

سهلة جداً	1	2	3	4	5	صعبة جداً
وضح اجابتك بذكر الاسباب.						
.....						
.....						
.....						

5- الى اي مدى تجد طول الجملة في قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية يعيق فهمك للقطع في السنة التحضيرية؟

لا يعيق ابداً 1 2 3 4 5 يعيق جداً

وضح اجابتك بذكر الاسباب.....

.....

.....

6- الى اي مدى تواجه صعوبة في فهم انواع مختلفة من قطع القراءة باللغة الانجليزية (قصص, علمية) في السنة التحضيرية؟

سهلة جداً 1 2 3 4 5 صعبة جداً

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....

.....

.....

الجزء الثاني: مدى اعداد قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية لنوعية القراءة في السنة التحضيرية.

1- بشكل عام, هل تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية اهلتك واعدتك جيداً لنوعية القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية؟

تؤهل جيداً 1 2 3 4 5 لا تؤهل ابداً

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

.....

.....

.....

2- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان مواضيع قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية اهلتك جيداً لفهم مواضيع القراءة التي تواجهك في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية؟

تؤهل جيداً 1 2 3 4 5 لا تؤهل ابداً

فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:

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3- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية طورت لديك المفردات العامة في اللغة الانجليزية (التي تستخدم في المحادثات العامة اليومية) مما يؤهلك على فهم قطع القراءة التي تواجهك في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
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4- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية طورت لديك المفردات الاكاديمية في اللغة الانجليزية (التي تستخدم بكثرة في المجال الاكاديمي) مما يؤهلك على فهم قطع القراءة التي تواجهك في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
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5- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية طورت لديك قواعد اللغة الانجليزية مما يؤهلك لفهم قطع القراءة التي واجهتك في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
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6- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية طورت لديك فهم انواع مختلفة من قطع القراءة (قصص علمية) باللغة الانجليزية مما يؤهلك على فهم قطع القراءة التي تواجهك في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
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7- الى اي مدى تعتقد قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية اهلتك على فهم و التعامل مع طول الجملة في قطع القراءة التي تعرض عليك في السنة التحضيرية؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
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8- الى اي مدى تعتقد قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية قد اهلتك على الفهم و التعامل مع القطع الطويلة التي تعرض عليك في السنة التحضيرية؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
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ملاحظة

- اذا كنت لن تكمل دراستك في الجامعة, الرجاء التوجه مباشرة الي السؤال 9 في الجزء الثالث.
- اذا كنت مستكملاً, استأنف الجامعة فضلاً اكمل الجزء الثالث.

الجزء الثالث: مدى اعداد قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية للقراءة في السنة الأولى.

عزيزي الطالب نحن نقدر انه ربما ليس لديك التصور الكامل لنوعية القراءة المطالب بها في السنة التحضيرية و لكن اجابتك مهمة لنا و لذلك اجب على الاسئلة التالية بناءً على ما تعتقد او ما تشعر به.

1- بشكل عام هل تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية تؤهلك لنوعية القراءة التي سوف تواجهها في السنة الاولى؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
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2- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان مواضيع قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية سوف تطورك لفهم ما سوف تقرأه في السنة الاولى من التخصص؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
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3- الى مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية طورت لديك الكلمات العامة (هي الكلمات الدارج استخدامها في الحالة اليومية باللغة الانجليزية), مما يؤهلك لفهم ما سوف تقرأه في السنة الاولى من تخصصك؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
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4- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية طورت لديك الكلمات الاكاديمية (هي الكلمات الدارج استخدامها في المجال الاكاديمي باللغة الانجليزية), مما يؤهلك لفهم ما سوف تقرأه في السنة الاولى من تخصصك؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
.....						
.....						

5- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية طورت لديك ادراك قواعد اللغة الانجليزية , مما يؤهلك لفهم ما سوف تقرأه في السنة الاولى من تخصصك؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
.....						
.....						

6- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية طورت لديك الادراك لفهم انواع مختلفة من النصوص (قصص، علميه) في اللغة الانجليزية، مما يساعدك لفهم ماسوف تقرأه في السنة الاولى من تخصصك ؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
.....						
.....						
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7- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية قد أهلتك لتقرأ جمل طويلة من الممكن ان تقرأها في السنة الاولى من تخصصك ؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
.....						
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8- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية قد أهلتك لتقرأ قطع قراءة طويلة من الممكن ان تقرأها في السنة الاولى من تخصصك ؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:						
.....						
.....						
.....						

9- اذا كان لديك اي معلومات اضافية تتعلق في هذا الموضوع ومن الممكن ان تساعدني في بحثي، ارجوا كتابتها.

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أشكر واقدر لك حسن تعاونك و أتمنى لك دوام التوفيق والسداد

إستبانه لطلاب السنة الجامعية الاولى

القراءة الانجليزية في السنة الجامعية الاولى

عزيزي الطالب,

تهدف هذه الإستبانه الى جمع بيانات تتعلق في محورين اساسيين:

أولاً: الصعوبات التي تواجه الطلاب في قراءة المناهج التي تُدرّس باللغة الانجليزية.

ثانياً: مدى فاعلية نصوص القراءة في منهج اللغة الانجليزية لمرحلة السنة التحضيرية في تطوير قدرات القراءة لدى الطلاب و تأهيلهم لقراءة نصوص اللغة الانجليزية في مرحلة السنة الاولى الجامعية.

صُممت هذه الاستبانه لغرض جمع البيانات لبحثي المقدم لدرجة الدكتوراه فقط, علماً بأن محتويات هذا الاستبيان بعد تفضلكم بتعبأتها سوف تستخدم لغرض الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه فقط, و سوف تظل المحتويات مجهولة المصدر, أقدر لكم كثيراً تعاونكم في المشاركة في البحث مع الرجاء مراعاة الملاحظات التالية عند اكتمال الاستبانه :

- الإستبانه الفعلية عبارة على 7 صفحات.
- تتضمن هذه الإستبانه على ثلاثة اقسام, كل قسم منها يتناول جانباً معيناً.
- يرجى ملاحظة انه لا توجد إجابات خاطئة او صائبة في جميع فقرات هذه الإستبانه و إن الطلاب يختلفون في قدراتهم و آرائهم. و بعبارة اخرى, انا حقا أود أن أتعرف هنا على ما تعتقد به اتجاه قطع القراءة التي قمت بدرسها سابقاً و ما هي الصعوبات التي تواجهك الآن و ليس ما ينبغي عمله, او ما تريد أن تعمله.
- الرجاء قراءة كل فقرة بنأني مع ذكر الأسباب لتوضيح إجابتك.
- أغلب الأسئلة المقدمة في هذه الإستبانه تتيح لك الإختيار من الرقم (1) وحتى الرقم (5), الرجاء اختيار الرقم المناسب حسب ما تعتقد.
- الرجاء الاجابة باللغة العربية فقط.

اقدر لك تعاونك في المشاركة في تعبئة هذه الإستبانه ☺

القسم الأول: بيانات الطالب.

- 1- التخصص:
- 2- اسم الكلية والقسم:
- 3- هل درست مواد اللغة الانجليزية خلال السنة الاولى؟
☐ نعم (الرجاء اعطاء التفاصيل التالية) ☐ لا (فضلاً اذهب الى السؤال رقم 4)
 اذا كانت الاجابة بنعم:
 أ- هل كانت المواد اختيارية او اجبارية؟
 ب- اذا كانت اختيارية, لماذا اخترتها؟
 ج- مانوع دورات اللغة الانجليزية التي تحضرها حالياً?
☐ لغة انجليزية عامة ☐ لغة انجليزية متخصصة (مثلاً لغة انجليزية متخصصة بالهندسة)
 د- كم عدد ساعات اللغة الانجليزية التي في جدولك في الاسبوع ؟ ساعة.
 4- كم عدد السنوات التي درست فيها اللغة الانجليزية متضمنة السنوات الدراسية في التعليم العام؟ سنة.
 5- اين درست المرحلة الثانوية؟
☐ مدرسة حكومية ☐ مدرسة خاصة حدد اسم المدرسة:
 6- هل سبق أن زرت دولة لغتها الرسمية هي اللغة الانجليزية؟
☐ نعم ☐ لا
 اذا كانت الاجابة بنعم:
 أ- ما اسم الدولة- الدول التي زرتها ؟
 ب- كم مرة زرت هذه الدولة او الدول؟
 ج- كم المدة التي قضيتها في كل زيارة؟
 7- هل سبق لك الدراسة في معهد لتدريس اللغة الانجليزية؟
☐ نعم (اذا كانت الاجابة بنعم اجب على الاسئلة التالية) ☐ لا (فضلاً توجه للسؤال رقم 9)
 أ- كم المدة التي قضيتها في الدراسة في هذا المعهد؟
 8- كم عدد المواد التي تُدرس في اللغة الانجليزية لديك في هذه السنة؟
 9- كم عدد الساعات الدراسية للمواد التي تُدرس باللغة الانجليزية في الاسبوع ؟ ساعة.
 10- كم عدد الساعات الدراسية لديك في هذا الفصل الدراسي؟ ساعة.

القسم الثاني: قراءتك باللغة الانجليزية بشكل عام

1- هل تحب القراءة باللغة الانجليزية؟

كثيراً	2	3	4	5	لا أبداً
1					
لماذا؟					
.....					
.....					

2- هل تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية غير مناهجك الدراسية؟ (مثلاً مجلات, صحف انجليزية, مواقع انترنت انجليزية)

كثيراً	2	3	4	5	لا أبداً
1					
إذا كانت الأجوبة بغير الرقم 1 ، فضلاً أجب على الفقرات التالية:					

أ- ماذا تقرأ في الوقت الحالي؟

ب- كم معدل ما تقرأه باللغة الانجليزية في الاسبوع؟

ج- لماذا تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية غير مناهجك الدراسية؟

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إذا كنت قد اخترت الرقم (1) في السؤال رقم 12، فضلاً أجب على السؤال التالي. أما إذا كنت قد اخترت غير الرقم (1) انتقل للسؤال رقم 13

د- لماذا لاتقرأ باللغة الانجليزية غير مناهجك الدراسية؟

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3- هل تواجه صعوبات في القراءة باللغة الانجليزية في غير مناهجك الدراسية؟

كثيراً	2	3	4	5	لا أبداً
1					
إذا كنت تواجه صعوبات فضلاً اذكرها؟					
.....					
.....					
.....					

القسم الثالث: قراءتك باللغة الانجليزية في السنة الاولى

الجزء الأول: صعوبات القراءة في السنة الجامعية الاولى.

1- الى اي مدى تجد ما قرأته في السنة الاولى مفهوماً لديك؟

صعب جداً					مفهوم جداً
5	4	3	2	1	

..... اذا كنت تواجه صعوبة في قراءة النصوص في السنة الاولى, وضح ملامح هذه الصعوبة.....

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2- الى اي مدى تواجه صعوبة في مواضيع قطع القراءة في السنة الاولى؟

صعبة جداً					سهلة جداً
5	4	3	2	1	

..... وضح اجابتك بذكر
الاسباب.....

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.....

3- الى اي مدى تواجه صعوبة في فهم الكلمات في قطع القراءة في السنة الاولى؟

صعبة جداً					سهلة جداً
5	4	3	2	1	

..... وضح اجابتك بذكر
الاسباب.....

.....

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.....

4- الى اي مدى تواجه صعوبة في فهم قواعد اللغة الانجليزية في قطع القراءة في السنة الاولى؟

صعبة جداً					سهلة جداً
5	4	3	2	1	

..... وضح اجابتك بذكر
الاسباب.....

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5- الى اي مدى تجد طول الجملة في قطع القراءة في السنة الاولى تعيق فهمك للقطع؟

تعيق جداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تعيق ابداً
وضح اجابتك بذكر						
الاسباب.....						
.....						
.....						
.....						

6- الى اي مدى تواجه صعوبة في فهم انواع مختلفة من قطع القراءة باللغة الانجليزية (قصص علمية) مما درست في السنة الاولى؟

مفهومة جداً	1	2	3	4	5	صعبة جداً
فضلاً اذكر						
الأسباب:.....						
.....						
.....						
.....						

الجزء الثاني: مدى اعداد قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية لنوعية القراءة في السنة الاولى.

1- بشكل عام، هل تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية قد اهلّتك واعدّتك جيداً لنوعية القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة الاولى؟

تؤهل جيداً	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
1					
فضلاً اذكر					
الأسباب:					
.....					
.....					
.....					

2- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان مواضيع قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية قد اهلّتك جيداً لفهم مواضيع القراءة التي تواجهك في مناهجك في السنة الاولى؟

تؤهل جيداً	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
1					
اذكر					
الأسباب:					
.....					
.....					
.....					

3- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية طورت لديك المفردات العامة في اللغة الانجليزية (التي تستخدم في المحادثات العامة اليومية) مما ساعدك على فهم قطع القراءة التي واجهتك في مناهجك في السنة الاولى؟

تؤهل جيداً	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
1					
فضلاً اذكر					
الأسباب:					
.....					
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4- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية قد طورت لديك المفردات الاكاديمية في اللغة الانجليزية (التي تستخدم بكثرة في المجال الاكاديمي) مما ساعدك على فهم قطع القراءة التي واجهتك في مناهجك في السنة الاولى؟

تؤهل جيداً	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
1					
فضلاً اذكر					
الأسباب:					
.....					
.....					
.....					

5- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية طورت لديك المفردات التقنية في اللغة الانجليزية (الكلمات المتخصصة في تخصصك) مما ساعدك لفهم قطع القراءة التي واجهتك في مناهجك في السنة الاولى.

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر						
الأسباب:					
					
					

6- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية قد طورت لديك ادراك قواعد اللغة الانجليزية مما ساعدك على فهم قطع القراءة التي واجهتك في مناهجك في السنة الاولى؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:					
					
					

7- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية قد طورت لديك فهم انواع مختلفة من قطع القراءة (قصص، علمية) باللغة الانجليزية مما ساعدك لفهم قطع القراءة التي واجهتك في مناهجك في السنة الاولى.

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:					
					
					

8- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية قد اعدتك واهلكتك على الفهم و التعامل مع طول الجمل التي تواجهك في السنة الاولى؟

تؤهل جيداً	1	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
فضلاً اذكر الأسباب:					
					
					

9- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية قد اعدتك واهلتهك على طول قطع القراءة التي تواجهك في السنة الاولى؟

تؤهل جيداً	2	3	4	5	لا تؤهل ابداً
1					
فضلاً اذكر					
الأسباب:					
.....					
.....					
.....					

10- اذا كان لديك اي معلومات اضافية تتعلق في هذا الموضوع ومن الممكن ان تساعدني في بحثي, ارجوا كتابتها.

.....

.....

.....

.....

أشكر واقدر لك حسن تعاونك و أتمنى لك دوام التوفيق والسداد

Appendix F: Teachers' interview questions

Interview questions for the English Secondary level's teachers

In this interview we will discuss the students' reading difficulties and to what extent the reading texts that Saudi students are exposed to at the secondary level in public schools are prepared them for university foundation year.

Section One: Demographic data

1. Hello, can you introduce yourself? (Nationality)
2. What is your secondary English school?
3. What is your qualification?
4. What is your first language?
5. Do you speak other languages? Specify?
6. How many years of university teaching experience do you have?
7. How many years of teaching experience do you have in Saudi? (for not Saudi teachers)

Section Two: The materials you use for teaching English reading

1. What English series do you use at your school?
2. Do you use any supplementary materials other than the textbooks to improve the students' reading ability?

If yes, please explain

- a. What sort of material is it? General or EAP?
- b. Why do you do this?
- c. Who decides the reading topics for the supplementary reading materials and how is it done?
- d. Does that affect the students reading improvement?

If no, please explain

- Why do not you use supplementary reading materials?

Section Three: Your students' General English reading

1. Do you encourage your students to read in English outside the classroom material (e.g. English magazines, newspaper, websites.....)?

If yes

- a) How? What do you suggest they read?

If no

- a) Why do you not encourage them to read English outside the classroom material?

Section Four: Students' reading difficulties

1. What do you think of the students' English reading level?
2. What is your sense of students' reading development during the secondary level?
3. Do your students face difficulties when they read their textbooks or anything else they have to read in the secondary stage?

If yes,

- a. What are these difficulties? How do they manifest themselves? give examples if possible?

Prompts

limited vocabulary size - limited knowledge of different types of texts - limited knowledge of structures - limited knowledge of various topics.

- b. Why do think that students face these difficulties?
- c. What is the biggest challenge that faces students when they read a text in English?
4. To what extent do you think that student face difficulties in answering different levels of reading comprehension questions (RCQs) in the sec school / final year? How and why?
 - a. Which are the biggest challenges for the students? why?

prompts

namely (1)literal comprehension, (2) inferential comprehension, (3) evaluation, (4) prediction and (5) appreciation

Section five: Students' preparation for the preparatory level

1. Tell me your opinion about the reading texts in the secondary level English textbooks?

2. To what extent do think the reading texts in the secondary stage develop student's reading ability, so that they can understand what they read at the preparatory level (or future) ? If yes, how? If no, why?

Prompts

general vocabulary - academic vocabulary - topics - structures (e.g. grammar) - types of texts – reading comprehension questions.

3. Do you think that the reading texts in the English textbooks need to be improved?
4. What do you think are the possible (solutions or suggestions) (if there is) to improve the students reading ability in the secondary stage, so they can understand the sort of reading they meet at the preparatory level?

Prompts

(Using supplementary reading materials, increase the number of teaching hours, increase the numbers of the reading texts in the textbooks)

Interview question for the English preparatory level teachers

In this interview we will discuss the students' reading difficulties and to what extent the reading texts that Saudi students are exposed to in the secondary level to prepare them to reading at the preparatory level, and also the efficiency of the reading texts at the preparatory level at NBU University are prepared them for first year university reading.

Section One: Demographic data

1. Hello, can you introduce yourself? (Nationality)
2. What is your qualification?
3. What is your first language?
4. Do you speak other languages? Specify?
5. How many years of university teaching experience do you have?
6. How many years of teaching experience do you have in Saudi? (for not Saudi teachers)

Section two: The materials you use for teaching English reading

1. Do you use any additional materials rather than the textbooks for teaching English reading?

➤ If yes, please explain

- e. What sort of material is it? (General or EAP)
- f. Why do you do this?
- g. Who decides the reading texts, and their topics for the supplementary materials and how is it done?
- h. Does that affect the students reading improvement?
- i. Do you provide the students different additional reading materials according to their potential disciplines in the first year?

If yes,

- How do you do that?
- Why do you do that?

If no,

- Why do you not provide the students different reading texts according to their disciplines? (e.g. reading texts for Engineering, medicine,)
- Does that affect the students reading improvement? How?

➤ If no, please explain

- a. Why do not you use supplementary reading materials?
- b. Does that affect the students reading improvement?

Section three: Your students' General English reading

1. Do you encourage your students to read in English outside the classroom material (e.g. English magazines, newspaper, websites, academic journals, specific magazine, or websites)?

If yes

- b) How? What do you suggest they read?

If no

- b) Why do not you encourage them to read English outside the classroom material

Section Four: Students' reading difficulty at the preparatory level

1. How did you find the students' English reading level at the preparatory level?
2. Do you think that students face difficulties when they read their textbooks or anything else they have to read at the preparatory level?
 - d. If YES, what are these difficulties? How do they manifest themselves?

Prompts

limited vocabulary size - particular types of texts (e.g. expository, narrative, and argumentative) - limited knowledge of structures - limited knowledge of various topics – Inadequate comprehension (reading comprehension questions)

- e. Why do think that students face these difficulties?
- f. What is the biggest challenge that faces students when they read a text in English?

prompts

limited vocabulary size (including the academic vocabulary and Technical vocabulary) - limited knowledge of different types of texts - limited knowledge of structures - limited knowledge of various topics - Inadequate comprehension (reading comprehension questions)

Section Five: The students' preparation for the preparatory level

1. Tell me your opinion about the reading texts in the secondary level English textbooks?
2. To what extend do you think what the student are well prepared for the foundation level, so that they can understand the sort of reading they do at the preparatory level?
 - a) If yes, how? If no, please say in what respect(s)?

prompts

*vocabulary size (including the academic vocabulary and Technical vocabulary)
 - knowledge of different types of texts - knowledge of structures (including
 academic structures) - knowledge of various topics - comprehension level*

Section Six: The students' preparation for the first year

1. To what extent do you think the reading texts at the preparatory level develop students' reading ability, so that they can understand what they read in the first year? if yes, how? If no, why?

Prompts

In terms of : general vocabulary - academic vocabulary - topics - academic structures (e.g. grammar) - types of texts - reading comprehension questions - different majors in the first year

2. If you have used supplementary reading materials, to what extent do you think they have helped in preparing the students for their first year reading? Please explain how.

Interview questions for first year subject teachers.

Section One: Demographic data

1. Hello, can you introduce yourself? (Nationality)
2. What is your college and department?
3. What is your qualification?
4. What is your first language?
5. Do you speak other languages? Specify?
6. How many years of university teaching experience do you have?
7. How many years of teaching experience do you have in Saudi? (for not Saudi teachers)

Section Two: Your students' General English reading

1. To what extent do your students like reading in English?
2. Do you encourage your students to read in English outside the classroom material other than your textbooks (e.g. academic journals, specific magazine, academic dispensary websites.....)?

If yes

- c) How?
- d) If some of your students do some reading, what are they reading at the moment?

If no

- c) Why do not you encourage them to read English outside the classroom material other than your textbooks?

Section three: The materials you use for teaching English reading

1. What kind of English materials do students need to read in the first year in your discipline?

Section Four: Students' reading difficulties

1. How did you see the students' English reading level when they started their first year?
2. To what extent do you think that the texts that students are exposed to in the first year match their level?
 - a. If it does not match their level, please say in what respect(s)?

3. Do you think that students face difficulties when they read their textbooks or anything else they have to read in the first year?

g. If YES, what are these difficulties? How do they manifest themselves?

Prompts

limited vocabulary size - particular types of texts (e.g. expository, narrative, and argumentative) - limited knowledge of structures - limited knowledge of various topics – Inadequate comprehension

h. Why do think that students faces these difficulties?

i. What is the biggest challenge that faces students when they read a text in English?

prompts

limited vocabulary size (including the academic vocabulary and Technical vocabulary) - limited knowledge of different types of texts - limited knowledge of structures - limited knowledge of various topics - Inadequate comprehension

Section five: Students' preparation for First year university level

1. Generally, Are you satisfied with the students' reading level?
2. To what extend do think what the student read at the preparatory level develop student's reading ability, so that you can understand the sort of reading in the first year? if yes, how? If no, please say in what respect(s)?

prompts

*vocabulary size (including the academic vocabulary and Technical vocabulary)
- knowledge of different types of texts - knowledge of structures - knowledge of various topics - comprehension level*

Teachers' interview questions (Arabic version)

أسئلة المقابلة لمعلمي اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية

في هذه المقابلة سوف نناقش مشاكل الطلاب في القراءة و الى اي مدى قطع القراءة التي يتعرض لها الطلاب في المرحلة الثانوية في المدارس الحكومية تحضرهم للسنة التحضيرية في المرحلة الجامعية.

القسم الاول: أسئلة تحضيرية و معلومات عامة عن الطالب

- 1- مرحبا, عرف عن نفسك؟ (الجنسية)
 - 2- ماهي المدرسة الثانوية التي تُدرس فيها ؟
 - 3- ماهي مؤهلاتك؟
 - 4- ماهي لغتك الام؟
 - 5- هل تتحدث لغات اخرى؟ حدد؟
 - 6- كم عدد سنوات خبرتك في التدريس ؟
 - 7- كم عدد سنوات الخبرة في التدريس في السعودية؟ (للمدرسين الغير سعوديين)
- القسم الثاني: المواد التي تُستخدم لتدريس القراءة باللغة الانجليزية.

- 1- ماهي السلسلة الانجليزية التي تُدرسها في المدرسة؟
- 2- هل تستخدم مواد اضافية غير المناهج الدراسية لتحسين قدرة الطلاب في القراءة؟ اذا كانت الاجابة نعم, الرجاء التوضيح

- 1- ماهي المواد الاضافية؟
- 2- لماذا تدرس؟
- 3- من يقرر مواضيع القراءة للمواد الاضافية وكيف يتم ذلك؟
- 4- هل تؤثر هذه الاضافات في تحسين القراءة عند الطلاب؟ اذا كانت الاجابة لا, الرجاء التوضيح

- 5- لماذا لاتستخدم مواد اضافية للقراءة؟
- القسم الثالث: قراءة الطلاب الانجليزية العامة.

- 1- هل تشجع الطلاب للقراءة غير المناهج الدراسية (مثلا مجلات, صحف, مواقع انترنت . .)؟ اذا كانت الاجابة نعم, كيف وماهي المقترحات المقدمة للقراءة؟ اذا كانت الاجابة لا, لماذا لاتشجع الطلاب للقراءة غير مناهجهم الدراسية؟

القسم الرابع: مشاكل الطلاب في القراءة.

- 1- كيف ترى مستوى الطلاب في القراءة؟
- 2- ماهو احساسك في تطور القراءه عند الطلاب خلال المرحلة الثانوية؟
- 3- هل يواجه طلابك صعوبات في القراءة في المناهج الدراسية او اي شي اخر يقرؤنه في المرحله الثانوية؟ اذا الاجابه نعم, أ- ماهي هذه الصعوبات؟ كيف يرون الطلاب انفسهم؟ (اضرب امثلة)

تلميحات:

حصيلة لغوية محدوده- معرفة محدود في انواع القطع- معرفة محدوده بالقواعد- معرفة محدوده

بمواضيع مختلفة

ب- لماذا تعتقد ان الطلاب يواجهون مثل هذه الصعوبات؟

ج- ماهي اكبر الصعوبات التي تواجه الطلاب عندما يقرؤن قطعة باللغة الانجليزية؟

القسم الخامس: تحضير الطلاب للسنة التحضيرية

1- مارأيك في قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية؟

2- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية طورت قدرة الطلاب لقراءة ماسبقرونها في السنه التحضيريه ؟ اذا

نعم, كيف؟ اذا لا, ماذا؟

تلميحات:

المفردات العامه- المفردات الاكاديمية- المواضيع- القواعد- انواع القطع- اسئلة الفهم.

3- هل تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية تحتاج الى تطوير؟

4- هل لديك أي معلومات إضافية عن القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية؟

اسئلة المقابلة لمعلمي اللغة الانجليزية في السنة التحضيرية

في هذه المقابلة سوف نناقش مشاكل الطلاب في القراءة و الى اي مدى قطع القراءة التي يتعرض لها الطلاب السعوديين في المرحلة الثانوية في المدارس الحكومية تحضرهم للسنة التحضيرية في المرحلة الجامعية و ايضا فعالية قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية في جامعة الحدود الشمالية في تحضير الطلاب للسنة الاولى من التخصص في المرحلة الجامعية.

القسم الاول: معلومات عامة

- 1- مرحبا , عرف عن نفسك؟ (الجنسية)
 - 2- ماهي مؤهلاتك؟
 - 3- ماهي لغتك الام؟
 - 4- هل تتحدث لغات اخرى؟ حدد؟
 - 5- كم عدد سنوات خبرتك في التدريس الجامعي؟
 - 6- كم عدد سنوات خبرتك في التدريس في السعودية؟ (للمدرسين الغير سعوديين)
- القسم الثاني: المواد التي تُستخدم لتدريس القراءة باللغة الانجليزية.

1- هل تستخدم مواد اضافية غير المناهج الدراسية لتحسين قدرة الطلاب في القراءة؟
اذا كانت الاجابة نعم, الرجاء التوضيح

- أ- ماهي هذه المواد؟ عامة او متخصصة؟
 - ب- لماذا تدرس مواد اضافية؟
 - ج- من يقرر مواضيع القراءة للمواد الاضافية وكيف يتم ذلك؟
 - د- هل تؤثر هذه الاضافات في تحسين القراءة عند الطلاب؟
 - هـ- هل تزود الطلاب بمواد اضافية للقراءة طبقا للتخصصاتهم في السنة الاولى؟
- اذا كانت الاجابة نعم,

• كيف تنطبق ذلك؟

• ولماذا؟

اذا كانت الاجابة لا , الرجاء التوضيح

• لماذا لاتزود الطلاب بمواد اضافية للقراءة طبقا للتخصصاتهم في السنة الاولى (مثلا قطع قراءة في

الهندسة , الطب , . . .)؟

• هل تؤثر على تحسين قراءة الطلاب؟

اذا كانت الاجابة لا ,

أ- لماذا لاتستخدم مواد اضافية للطلاب؟

ب- هل تؤثر على تحسين قراءة الطلاب؟

القسم الثالث: قراءة الطلاب الانجليزية العامه.

1- هل تشجع الطلاب للقراءة غير المناهج الدراسية (مثلا مجلات , صحف , مواقع انترنت . . .)؟

اذا كانت الاجابة نعم,

كيف وماهي المقترحات المقدمة للقراءة؟

اذا كانت الاجابة لا ,

لماذا لاتشجع الطلاب للقراءة غير مناهجهم الدراسية؟

القسم الرابع: مشاكل الطلاب في القراءة في السنة التحضيرية.

- 1- كيف ترى مستوى الطلاب في القراءة في السنة التحضيرية؟
- 2- هل يواجه طلابك صعوبات في القراءة في المناهج الدراسية او اي شي اخر يقرؤونه في السنة التحضيرية؟

إذا الاجابه نعم،

أ- ماهي هذه الصعوبات؟ كيف يرون الطلاب انفسهم؟ (اضرب امثلة)

تلميحات:

حصيلة لغوية محدودة- معرفة محدود في انواع القطع- معرفة محدوده بالقواعد- معرفة محدوده بمواضيع مختلفة

ب- لماذا تعتقد ان الطلاب يواجهون مثل هذه الصعوبات؟

ج- ماهي اكبر الصعوبات التي تواجه الطلاب عندما يقرؤن قطعة باللغة الانجليزية؟

تلميحات:

حصيلة لغوية محدودة (تشمل المفردات الاكاديمية و التقنية)- معرفه محدوده في انواع مختلفة من المواضيع القطع- معرفة محدوده بالقواعد- معرفة محدوده في مواضيع مختلفة- فهم غير كافي (اسئلة الفهم في القراءة)

القسم الخامس: تحضير الطلاب للسنة التحضيرية

- 1- مارأيك في قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية؟
- 2- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية طورت قدرة الطلاب لقراءة ماسبقروونه في السنه التحضيريه ؟ اذا نعم، كيف؟ اذا لا، ماذا؟

تلميحات:

الحصيلة اللغوية (تشمل المفردات الاكاديمية والتقنية)-معرفة انواع مختلفة من القطع- معرفة القواعد (التركيب)(تشمل الاكاديميه)-معرفة مواضيع مختلفة- مستوى الفهم

القسم السادس: تحضير الطلاب للسنة الاولى من التخصص في المرحلة الجامعية

- 1- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في السنة التحضيرية تطور مستوى الطلاب في القراءة ،لذلك سيفهمون ماسبقروونه في السنة الاولى من التخصص؟ اذا نعم، كيف؟ اذا لا، كيف؟

تلميحات:

على مستوى: مفردات اكاديمية- مفردات اكاديمية- مواضيع- جمل اكاديميه (مثلا قواعد)- انواع قطع - اسئلة الفهم- تخصصات مختلفة في السنة الاولى.

- 2- اذا كنت تستخدم مواد اضافية للقراءة، الى اي مدى تعتقد ان هذه المواد الاضافية تساعد في تحضير الطلاب في السنة الاولى؟ الرجاء التوضيح .
- 3- هل لديك أي معلومات إضافية عن القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية؟

اسئلة المقابلة لمعلمي المواد في السنة الاولى

القسم الاول: معلومات عامة

1. مرحبا، عرف عن نفسك؟ (الجنسية)
2. ماهي كليتك وتخصصك؟
3. ماهي مؤهلاتك؟
4. ماهي لغتك الام؟
5. هل تتحدث لغات اخرى؟ حدد؟
6. كم عدد سنوات خبرتك في التدريس الجامعي؟
7. كم عدد سنوات خبرتك في التدريس في السعودية؟ (للمدرسين الغير سعوديين)

القسم الثاني: قراءة الطلاب العامة في اللغة الانجليزية.

1. الى اي مدى تعتقد ان الطلاب يحبون القراءة باللغة الانجليزية؟
2. هل تشجع الطلاب للقراءة غير المناهج الدراسية (مثلا مقالات اكايدمية, مجلات متخصصة في مجال ما, مواقع طبية. . .)؟
- إذا كانت الاجابة نعم،
- كيف ؟
- اذا احد من طلابك يقرأ ماذا يقرأ حالياً؟
- إذا كانت الاجابة لا،
- لماذا لاتشجع الطلاب للقراءة غير مناهجهم الدراسية؟

القسم الثالث: المواد التي يقرأ الطلاب في السنة الاولى الجامعية

1. مانوع المواد الانجليزية التي يحتاجها الطلاب في السنة الاولى في تخصصهم؟

القسم الرابع: صعوبات الطلاب في القراءة

1. كيف ترى مستوى الطلاب في قراءة موادهم في السنة الاولى؟
2. الى اي مدى تعتقد ان مستوى القطع التي يقرأها الطلاب تتوافق مع مستواهم في السنة الاولى؟
- أ- اذا كانت توافق او تتماشى مع مستواهم, الرجاء ذكر اسبابك ؟
3. هل تعتقد ان الطلاب يواجهون صعوبات في قراءة مناهجهم الدراسية او اي شي اخر يقرؤنه في السنه الاولى؟
- اذا كانت الاجابه نعم،

تلميحات:

- حصيلة لغويه محدودة- نوعيه معينه من القطع (مثلا التفسير, السردى و المجادله)-معرفة مدوده في القواعد- معرفة محدودة في انواع مختلفة بالمواضيع- استيعاب غير كافي للقطع
- لماذا تعتقد الطلاب يواجهون مثل هذه الصعوبات؟
 - ماهواكبر تحدي او مشكلة يتعرض لها الطلاب عندما يقرؤن موادهم الدراسية في اللغة الانجليزية؟

القسم الخامس: تحضير الطلاب للقراءة في السنة الاولى الجامعية

1. الى اي مدى تعتقد ان مايقروونه الطلاب في السنة التحضيرية يحسن ويطور من قدرة الطلاب , لذلك سيفهمون ماسيقروونه في السنة الاولى؟ اذا نعم, كيف؟ اذا لا , كيف؟

تلميحات:

الحصيلة اللغوية(تشمل المفردات الاكاديمية والتقنية)- معرفة معرفة مختلف الانواع من القطع- معرفة القواعد- معرفة مواضيع مختلفة- مستوى الفهم

2. هل لديك أي معلومات إضافية عن القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية؟

Appendix G: Student's interview questions

Interview for the students at the secondary level

Section one: Background and Warm up Questions

- 1- Introduce yourself as that you like?
- 2- What is the English series you study at the school?
- 3- What do you want to do after school?
- 4- Have you ever studied English abroad?

If yes, why, where, and for how long.

- 5- Have you ever studied English in a private institution?

If yes, why, where, and for how long.

[If the students do not match our study criteria, the interview will be finished at this stage and the participants would be excluded from the study]

- 6- Do you like reading in English?

If yes,

- e. What are you reading at the moment outside the classroom material other than your textbooks (e.g. English magazines, newspaper, websites.....)?
- f. How many hours on average do you spend in reading English apart from your textbooks per week?
- g. Why do you read outside your textbooks?
- h. Do you face difficulties in reading out of class? Why? Or why not?

If no, Why you do not read English apart from your textbooks?

Section two: Your English reading at the secondary textbooks

Part one: difficulties of reading texts at the secondary level

- 1- Tell me about your experience with reading the reading texts at your English textbooks?
- 2- What kinds of reading texts you read in your English textbooks?
- 3- Do you face any difficulties in reading texts in your textbooks at the secondary level?

If yes, please say in what ways and how?

Prompts

Difficulties in Topic, General vocabulary, academic vocabulary, structures, types of text, sentence length, text length (*if anything mentioned not in the list, I will investigate them with follow up questions*)

- 4- What is the main factor that hinders your reading comprehension? Why?

Part two: The efficiency of the reading texts for preparing for the next educational level

(The students will be encourage to answer the following questions although they may have little information about the reading at the next education level)

- 1- To what extent do think the reading texts in the secondary stage develop your reading, so that you can understand what you will read at the preparatory level?
 - a) If yes, in what ways? And How?
 - b) If no, in what ways? and Why not?

Prompts:

In terms of general vocabulary, academic, topics, structure, types of texts, text length and sentence length. (*if anything mentioned not in the list, I will investigate them with follow up questions*)

- 2- Do have any additional thoughts about reading English at secondary level?

Interview for the students at the Preparatory level

Section one: background and Warm up Questions

- 1- Could you please introduce yourself as you like?
- 2- What are you planning to study in the university next year?
- 3- Have you ever studied English abroad?

If yes, why, where, and for how long.

- 4- Have you ever studied English in a private institution?

If yes, why, where, and for how long.

- 5- What is the English series did you study at the secondary level?

[If the students do not match our study criteria, the interview will be finished at this stage and the participants would be excluded from the study]

- 6- Are you studying English now?

If yes, what types of English course, and how many hours per week?

- 7- What English series do you study at the preparatory level?

- 8- Do you like reading in English?

If yes,

- i. What are you reading at the moment outside the classroom material other than your textbooks (e.g. English magazines, newspaper, websites.....)?
- j. How many hours on average do you spend in reading English apart from your textbooks per week?
- k. Why do you read outside your textbooks?
- l. Do you face difficulties in reading out of class? Why? Or why not?

If no, Why you do not read English apart from your textbooks?

Section Two: Your English reading at the preparatory level and secondary level

Part one: The difficulties of reading texts at the preparatory level

- 1- Tell me about your experience with reading the reading texts at your English textbooks?
- 2- What kinds of reading texts you read in your English textbooks?
- 3- Do you face any difficulties with the reading texts at the preparatory level?
If yes, please say how and in what ways?
- 4- What is the most factor that hinder your reading comprehension? And why?

Prompts

Difficulties in Topic, General vocabulary, academic vocabulary, structures, types of text,

Part two: The efficiency of the reading texts at the secondary level for preparing for the preparatory level reading

- 1- To what extent do think the reading texts at the secondary stage developed your reading, so that you can understand what you read at the preparatory level?
c) How? And in what ways?
d) Why not?

Prompts:

In terms of general vocabulary, academic, topics, structure, types of texts, text length and sentence length. *(if anything mentioned not in the list, I will investigate them with follow up questions)*

Part three: The efficiency of the reading texts at the preparatory level for preparing for the first year university level

- 1- To what extent do you think that the reading texts at the preparatory level will prepare you to what will do in the first year?
• If yes, in what ways and How?
• If no, in what ways and Why?

Prompts:

in terms of general vocabulary, academic, topics, structure, types of texts, comprehension level.

- 2- Do have any additional information.?

Interview for the students at the First Year University level

Section one: Background and Warm up Questions

1- Could you please introduce yourself as you like?

2- What is your major and departments?

3- Did you study English abroad?

If yes, why, where, and for how long.

4- Did you study English in a private institution?

If yes, why, where, and for how long.

5- Are you studying English now?

If yeas, could describe the course that you are studying?

type of English course, hours per week,

6- What is the English series did you study at the secondary level?

7- What is the English series did you study at the preparatory level?

[If the students do not match our study criteria, the interview will be finished at this stage and the participants would be excluded from the study]

8- Do you like reading in English?

If yes,

a. What are you reading at the moment outside the classroom material other than your textbooks (e.g. English magazines, newspaper, websites.....)?

b. How many hours on average do you spend in reading English apart from your textbooks per week?

c. Why do you read outside your textbooks?

d. Do you face difficulties in reading out of class? Why? Or why not?

If no, Why you do not read English apart from your textbooks?

Section two: Your English reading at the First year university level

Part one: The difficulties of reading texts at the First year university level

1. Tell me about your experience with reading the reading texts at your English textbooks?

2. What kinds of reading texts you read in your English textbooks?
3. Do you face any difficulties in what you read in the first year?

If yes, please say how and in what ways?

Prompts

Difficulties in Topic (content), General vocabulary, academic vocabulary, structures, types of text, technical vocabulary, text length, sentence length

4. What is the most factor that hinder your reading comprehension? And why?

Part two: The efficiency of the reading texts at the preparatory level for preparing for the First year university reading level

1. To what extend do think the reading texts at the preparatory level developed your reading, so that you can understand what you read in the first year?
 - a) How, and why? And in what ways?
 - b) Why not?

Prompts:

in terms of general vocabulary, academic, topics, structure, types of texts, comprehension level.

2. Do have any additional information?

Students' interview questions (Arabic version)

أسئلة المقابلة لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية

القسم الأول: أسئلة تحضيرية و معلومات عامة عن الطالب

- 1- عرف عن نفسك كما تريد؟
- 2- ماهي سلسلة اللغة الانجليزية التي تدرسها في المدرسة؟
- 3- ماذا تريد أن تفعل بعد المرحلة الثانوية؟
- 4- هل سبق ان درست اللغة الإنجليزية في الخارج؟
- إذا كانت الاجابة نعم, اين درست وكم كانت المدة التي قضيتها؟
- 5- هل سبق لك ان درست اللغة الانجليزية في معهد لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية؟
- إذا كانت الاجابة نعم, أين درست وكم كانت المدة التي قضيتها؟
- (إذا كان الطالب المشارك لا تنطبق عليه معايير الدراسة, المقابلة ستنتهي عند هذه المرحلة وسوف يتم استبعاده من الدراسة)

- 6- هل تحب القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية؟
- إذا كانت الاجابة نعم,
- أ. ماذا تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية خارج المواد الدراسية (مثلاً, مجلات باللغة الإنجليزية, صحف, مواقع الانترنت)؟
- ب. كم عدد الساعات التي تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية في الأسبوع غير المواد الدراسية باللغة الإنجليزية؟
- ت. لماذا تقرأ باللغة الإنجليزية غير المواد الدراسية؟
- ث. هل تواجه صعوبات في القراءة عند قراءة غير مناهجك الدراسية ؟ لماذا؟ لماذا لا؟
- إذا الاجابة لا, لماذا لاتقرأ باللغة الإنجليزية غير مناهجك الدراسية؟

القسم الثاني: القراءة في المناهج الدراسية باللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية

الجزء الأول: صعوبات قطع القراءة في مناهج المرحلة الثانوية

- 1- اخبرني عن تجربتك في قراءة قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية؟
- 2- مانوع قطع القراءة التي تقرأها في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية؟
- 3- هل تواجه مشاكل في قطع القراءة في مناهج المرحلة الثانوية؟
- إذا كانت الاجابة نعم,
- اذكر ماهي الصعوبات وكيفيةها ؟

تلميحات

صعوبات في المواضيع, المفردات العامه, الاكاديمية, القواعد, انواع القطع , طول الجمل , طول القطع (إذا ذكرت اي مشكله غير المذكورة , سأتابعها بأسئله)

- 4- ماهو اكثر ما يعيق فهمك في القراءة؟ لماذا؟

الجزء الثاني: فعالية قطع القراءة للتحضير للمرحلة السنة التحضيرية

(سوف يشجع الطلاب للأجابة على الأسئلة القادمة بالرغم من ان معلوماتهم للمرحلة القادمة متوقع ان تكون بسيطة)

1- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية طورت القراءة لدرجة انك ستفهم ماستقراءة في السنة التحضيرية؟

أ. اذا كانت الاجابة نعم, ماذا طورت وكيف؟

ب. اذا كانت الاجابة لا, لماذا لم تطور وكيف؟

تلميحات:

على مستوى المفردات العامه, الاكاديمية, المواضيع, القواعد, انواع القطع, طول القطع والجمال. (اذا ذكرت صفة جديدة غير المذكور سأتبعها بأسئلة)

2- هل لديك أي معلومات إضافية عن القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية؟

أسئلة المقابلة لطلاب السنة التحضيرية

القسم الأول: أسئلة تحضيرية و معلومات عامة عن الطالب

- 1- عرف عن نفسك كما تريد؟
- 2- ماذا سوف تدرس في السنة القادمة؟
- 3- هل سبق ان درست اللغة الانجليزية في الخارج؟
إذا كانت الاجابة نعم, اين درست وكم كانت المدة المدة التي قضيتها ؟
- 4- هل سبق لك ان درست اللغة الانجليزية في معهد لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية؟
إذا كانت الاجابة نعم, أين درست وكم كانت المدة التي قضيتها؟
- 5- ماهي السلسلة الانجليزية التي درستها في المرحلة الثانوية؟
(إذا كان الطالب المشارك لا تنطبق عليه معايير الدراسة المقابلة ستنتهي عند هذه المرحلة وسوف يتم استبعاده من الدراسة)
- 6- هل تدرس اللغة الانجليزية الآن؟
إذا كانت الاجابة نعم, مانوع المواد الانجليزية التي تدرسها , وكم ساعة في الاسبوع؟
- 7- ماهي السلسلة الانجليزية التي تدرسها الان في السنة التحضيرية؟
- 8- هل تحب القراءة باللغة الانجليزية؟
إذا كانت الاجابة نعم,

- أ. ماذا تقرأ حاليا باللغة الانجليزية خارج المواد الدراسية (مثلا, مجلات باللغة الانجليزية, صحف, مواقع الانترنت.....)؟
- ب. كم عدد الساعات التي تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية في الاسبوع غير المواد الدراسية باللغة الانجليزية؟
- ت. لماذا تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية غير المواد الدراسية؟
- ث. هل تواجه صعوبات في القراءة عند قراءة غير مناهجك الدراسية ؟ لماذا؟ لماذا لا؟
إذا الاجابة لا, لماذا لاتقرأ باللغة الانجليزية غير مناهجك الدراسية؟

القسم الثاني: القراءة في المناهج الدراسية باللغة الانجليزية في المرحلة التحضيرية و الثانوية

الجزء الأول: صعوبات قطع القراءة في مناهج المرحلة التحضيرية

- 1- اخبرني عن تجربتك في قراءة قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية.
- 2- مانوع قطع القراءة التي تقرأها في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية؟
- 3- هل تواجه مشاكل في قطع القراءة في مناهج المرحلة الثانوية؟
إذا كانت الاجابة نعم,
اذكر ماهي الصعوبات وكيفيتها ؟

تلميحات

صعوبات في المواضيع, المفردات العامه, الاكاديمية, القواعد, انواع القطع , طول الجمل , طول القطع
(إذا ذكرت اي مشكله غير المذكورة , سأتابعها بأسئله)

4- ماهو اكثر ما يعيق فهمك في القراءة؟ لماذا؟

الجزء الثاني: فعالية (كفانة) قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية لتحضير الطلاب للمرحلة التحضيرية.

1- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في المرحلة الثانوية طورت القراءة لدرجة انك تستطيع فهم ما تقرأ في السنة التحضيرية بسهولة؟

- أ. اذا كانت الاجابة نعم, ماذا طورت وكيف؟
ب. اذا كانت الاجابة لا, لماذا لم تطور وكيف؟

تلميحات:

على مستوى المفردات العامه, الاكاديمية, المواضيع, القواعد, انواع القطع, طول القطعة , طول الجملة . (اذا ذكرت صفة جديدة غير المذكور سأتابعها بأسئلة)

الجزء الثالث: فعالية (كفانة) قطع القراءة في المرحلة التحضيرية لتحضير الطلاب للسنة الاولى للتخصص

1- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في المرحلة التحضيرية طورت القراءة لدرجة انك ستفهم ما ستقرأ في السنة الاولى من التخصص بسهولة؟

- أ. اذا كانت الاجابة نعم, ماذا طورت وكيف؟
ب. اذا كانت الاجابة لا, لماذا لم تطور وكيف؟

تلميحات:

على مستوى المفردات العامه, الاكاديمية, المواضيع, القواعد, انواع القطع, طول القطع والجمال . (اذا ذكرت صفة جديدة غير المذكور سأتابعها بأسئلة)

1- هل لديك أي معلومات إضافية عن ما تم مناقشته؟

أسئلة المقابلة لطلاب السنة الأولى في المرحلة الجامعية

القسم الأول: أسئلة تحضيرية و معلومات عامة عن الطالب

- 1- عرف عن نفسك كما تريد؟
- 2- ماهو قسمك والتخصص؟
- 3- هل سبق ان درست اللغة الانجليزية في الخارج؟
إذا كانت الاجابة نعم, اين درست وكم كانت المدة التي قضيتها
- 4- هل سبق لك ان درست اللغة الانجليزية في معهد لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية ؟
إذا كانت الاجابة نعم, اين درست وكم كانت المدة التي قضيتها ؟
- 5- هل تدرس اللغة الانجليزية الان؟
إذا كانت الاجابة نعم, اوصف لنا المواد التي تدرسها باللغة الانجليزية
- 6- ماهي السلسلة الانجليزية التي درستها في المرحلة الثانوية؟
- 7- ماهي السلسلة الانجليزية التي درستها في المرحلة التحضيرية ؟
(إذا كان الطالب المشارك لا تنطبق عليه معايير الدراسة المقابلة ستنتهي عند هذه المرحلة وسوف يتم استبعاده من الدراسة)

- 8- هل تحب القراءة باللغة الانجليزية؟
إذا كانت الاجابة نعم

- أ. ماذا تقرأ حاليا باللغة الانجليزية خارج المواد الدراسية (مثلا, مجلات باللغة الانجليزية, صحف, مواقع الانترنت)؟
- ب. كم عدد الساعات التي تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية في الاسبوع غير المواد الدراسية باللغة الانجليزية؟
- ت. لماذا تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية غير المواد الدراسية؟
- ث. هل تواجه صعوبات في القراءة بغير مناهجك الدراسية ؟ لماذا؟ لماذا لا؟
إذا الاجابة لا, لماذا لا تقرأ باللغة الانجليزية غير مناهجك الدراسية؟

القسم الثاني: القراءة في المناهج الدراسية باللغة الانجليزية في السنة الأولى من التخصص في المرحلة الجامعية

الجزء الأول: صعوبات قطع القراءة في مناهج السنة الأولى من التخصص في المرحلة الجامعية.

- 1- اخبرني عن تجربتك في قراءة قطع القراءة في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية.
- 2- مانوع قطع القراءة التي تقرأها في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية؟
- 3- هل تواجه مشاكل في قطع القراءة في مناهج السنة الأولى من التخصص في المرحلة الجامعية؟

إذا كانت الاجابة نعم,

اذكر ماهي الصعوبات وكيفيةها ؟

تلميحات

صعوبات في المواضيع (المحتوى) , المفردات العامه, الاكاديمية, القواعد, انواع القطع , المفردات التقنية, طول الجمل , طول القطع.

4- ماهو اكثر ما يعيق فهمك في القراءة؟ لماذا؟

الجزء الثاني: فعالية (كفاءة) قطع القراءة في المرحلة التحضيرية لتحضير الطلاب للسنة الاولى من التخصص في المرحلة الجامعية.التضيرية.

1- الى اي مدى تعتقد ان قطع القراءة في المرحلة التحضيرية طورت القراءة لدرجة انك ستفهم ماستقرأه في

السنة الاولى من التخصص في المرحلة الجامعية؟

ج. اذا كانت الاجابة نعم, ماذا طورت وكيف؟

ح. اذا كانت الاجابة لا, لماذا لم تطور وكيف؟

تلميحات:

على مستوى المفردات العامه, الاكاديمية, المواضيع, القواعد, انواع القطع, طول القطع والجمال. (اذا ذكرت صفة جديدة غير المذكور سأتابعها بأسئلة)

2- هل لديك أي معلومات إضافية عن ما تم مناقشته؟

Appendix H: Example of interviews

Students interview (Secondary level)

Hello, thank you for participating in my study, Could you please introduce yourself Introduce yourself in a way that you like?

My name is X, I am studying at the King Fahad secondary school. Now I am in the final year.

1. What is the English series that you did study in your school?

I have studied English for Saudi Arabia textbooks.

2. What are you planning to do after graduating from the secondary level?

I will join the university study in the next academic year. I am planning to study engineering.

3. Have you ever studied English abroad?

No. I wish if I could that to improve my English.

4. Have ever studied English in a private institution?

No. unfortunately we do not have in our city a good English institution, we only have one and it is waste of time and money.

5. Do you like English?

Yes. I like English and I wish if I could master the English Language, and I can speak, write, read, and understand it very well. You know English has become nowadays very important in studying at the university.

6. Do you like reading in English?

Reading in general is not my favourite hobby, but I do read sometimes in Arabic, and I wish I could read and understand in English.

7. Ok. Are you reading anything apart of your textbooks these days?

No. I do not read anything in English out of my textbooks. It is difficult and I do not understand when I read English outside my textbooks.

8. Why you do not read in English apart from your school English textbooks?

Because I feel it is too difficult for me, and I do not understand what I read. Reading in English requires knowledge of large number of vocabulary, and there is huge number of words that I do not know when I try to read anything in English. Thus, if I need to understand something written in English, I always translate it by using google translate website.

9. Tell me about your experience with reading in your school?

In schools we only read English during the English classes. We have about one or two reading texts in each unit and the teacher normally translate the new and the unfamiliar

vocabulary in the classroom, after that sometimes the teacher read for us the text and explained it to us through translating it to Arabic. After that if there is enough time we are asked to read the text silently, and then we and the teachers answer the questions that followed the texts. But usually I do not practice too much reading in the class.

10. Do you read the texts again and study it at home?

Honestly, I do not read the texts and study them unless we have exam. I spent two or three days focusing in studying for the English exam. But often I revise what I have studied in school at home and doing my homework which includes sometimes reading texts.

11. Why you do not read it at home after you have studied it at the school?

I found it too difficult for me, and it takes too much time to read and translate the texts, and I have other subjects and assignments need to be done I cannot spend too much time on the English and leave the other subjects.

Another important reason is usually the end the of the terms or even before the med-term exam, in the revision classes teacher normally give us specific lessons and questions to study them for the exam, so I focus on what the teachers said about the exams.

12. What kinds of reading texts you read in your English textbooks?

I think most of what we read in the English textbooks are stories, dialogue or a text talks about something for example about the Holy mosque, or about someone such as King Abdul-Aziz.

13. To what extend to face difficulties in reading the texts in your textbooks?

I feel that English is one of the most difficult subjects. When I read in my textbooks I face difficulty in understand what I have read, as there are many words in the texts that are unfamiliar to me.

14. Could explain how and give an example?

Ok . for example when I start reading say a paragraph, sometimes I understand the first sentence and then when I read more I face many words that I do not know then I lose the idea and I could connect meaning of the words that I read together. And I could not guess what these words mean because there are many words unfamiliar to me. If it is one or two words, I may able to skip them or guess them and would not affect my understanding too much.

15. Can you think of other difficulties?

I also face difficulties with difficult sentence structures. I face sometimes sentences that contain difficult structure and because of this structure I could not understand them. I do not have too much knowledge about the grammar in English and I do not understand the differences between them. For example, in Arabic we only have three tenses but in English there many tenses, and I know the form of many of these tenses but when I read them in the texts I do not got the understand the differences say for example the present perfect and the present simple.

16. What about the topics of the reading texts do you face any difficulties with them?

No I do not have problems with the topics. They are not difficult and most of them about something that we are familiar with, and most them from our cultures or about someone that we are already know.

17. Why do you think that you face these difficulties?

I think there are many reasons and one of the main reasons is the differences between the Arabic and English. These differences cause confusion to us. For example, pronouncing the letters and words.

I think also my poor level in English, we do not practise English. We do not have enough vocabulary size. Therefore, we are not able to read and understand even very simple sentences. I think we do not prepared very well at the early stages elementary and intermediate stages and we come to the secondary level the mission become more difficult for us. it is become now difficult for me to study. This problem is hard to be solved in the later stage. it is become out of my stand.

Also the way that we are taught is one of the reasons the teacher teach us in Arabic, so we do not practise English even in the English classes, and the teacher only translate the text for us and answer the questions for in the classroom and we only memorize and study them before the exams.

18. Do you think that the reading texts in the Secondary stage have prepared you to the reading next year (preparatory level)?

I do not think so. I know that I have poor English skills and not only me most of the students are similar to my English level. What we have studied in the secondary stage is all for the English exams not for learning and improving our English and reading.

We have studied reading texts in the school but we do not learn too much from them, we only studied them to pass the exams.

19. Ok what about the reading texts themselves, do you think they are helpful to prepare you to meet the reading that you will encounter next year?

I think no.

20. Why do you think that the reading texts have not prepared you to the next reading level?

Simply we do not learn from them. They are not interesting, as most of the topics that are not interested for us, most it is hardly to find a topic talks about what we are studying in the future.

21. What do you mean by not about what you are study in the future?

I mean that the reading texts topics that we read in the secondary level are not related to what the students will study in the university. For example, I am plaining to study Engineering, I

cannot find any texts talk about something in engineering in general most of the topics are studies or related to Saudi and Islamic culture.

Another issue is we do not have a large number of reading texts, we have studied Arabic in the school we studied reading as separate subjects in all elementary stage and intermediate stage, and how do expect from me to be good in reading English through studying some texts. I think we do not expose to enough reading materials in English. And finally, the teachers that were taught us, most of them do not teach us English, they only translate to us and we understand the English through the Arabic language.

22. Let us talk with more specific about the reading texts in the in the English textbooks?

Ok. I Think The textbooks were not paying more attention the reading skills, and they more focus on English grammar rather than the main skills.

I am trying to think about another reason. I think the reading texts in the textbooks might be short, and think that when we go the university we will need to read longer texts. Thus, I may say the reading texts at the secondary level are not helpful at the required level.

23. Anything to add to this topic?

I would like to say that it is really disappointment when we spend years studying English at school and we still find English is the main obstacle that will face us in university.

Finally, I would like to say that really we face problem in English in general not only in reading. I really hope what you are doing can help us or other students in improve their English. Thank you.

Foundation Teacher interview

(Prep.T 2)

Thank you for your participating in my study, Could you please introduce yourself?

My name is X. I am from X. I have BA in English Language, and MA in Applied Linguistics. I have been teaching for three years in this university.

1. What is your first language?

My native language is Arabic.

2. What other language do you speak?

I also speak French, Italian and English.

3. How long have been teaching English in Saudi Arabia?

3 years in Saudi Arabia.

4. How long have been teaching English including your teaching experience in Saudi Arabia?

My total teaching experience is 8 years in Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia.

5. Now I am asking you some questions about your students. First, to what extend do you think that your students in foundation year like reading in English?

I think that most of my students do not like reading in English and even in Arabic. I noted that the students nowadays with the spread of technology spend most of their time on a social media and interact with each other rather than reading for improving their English. They ignore reading in English because I think it is too difficult for them. Their English proficiency is not at the levels that enable to read and understand the English texts that my encounter in newspaper, or English books such as novels.

6. Do you encourage your students to read outside their classroom materials?

Yes, off course I encourage them to read in English to practise the English language and to improve their reading ability.

7. How??

I always try to encourage them to read their materials and memorize the vocabulary, and also to use the website and practice English. The university offer them one year free subscribe in the Leaning English website, this will help you to improve your language a lot and quicker, But the problem, it hard to motivate them, they do not care about their English level.

8. Can tell me about the reading that you used in teaching reading at the preparatory level?

We are only using one English textbooks' series. That is deviated to 8 books. We only use all the reading materials in these textbooks. We should arise one important thing which is in

these textbooks; the focus is not too much on the reading, but it is in the listening and speaking. This does not mean that the reading is neglected, but only the focus on the listening and speaking. If we say that the listening and speaking considered 60 or 70 %, the reading would be about 25 to 30%.

9. OK, Do you offer the students the reading materials according to their potential discipline ?

The books that we used focus on the English basics, and this is general English, and it does not focus on any disciplines. We try to teach them some academic English when it is possible but I think this is the right textbooks for the students.

10. Why you would not use any ESP materials?

Well. I explain you in this question, Do you expected the new born baby to run before crawling?, the child need to crawl, then you can train them to walk and run?

This is like the students, we need to teach them the basic, and if they acquired the basics, we can teach them the ESP.

The ESP course is an advance issue, whether it is reading, speaking, listening, or writing. In all its cases, it is an advance issue. Does this make sense, if you ask the child to run, if s/he cannot crawl?

I think the students in the foundation level should focus mainly on the general English, and if there is enough time and I do not think so, and we feel that the students are ready to expose to the ESP materials, we can do that of course if the administration agree.

11. Do you mean it is not important to teach the student ESP in the foundation year?

I will explain this to you from my point of view. The foundation year is only 2 terms, and the entire student that come from the secondary stage should enrol to this programme. What is their level in English after the school? This year we made the placement test for all the students. We found that only a few students, you can count them in one hand fingers, who could pass this exam? Therefore, all the students start from the beginning.

Because of the student English level, we can teach them ESP at least these days. This will be beyond their level.

12. Do you think that might be affecting preparing the student for the reading next year?

Off course this will be affect negatively on the students' study next year, as they need English in their disciplines, and they have trained in how to deal with these types of texts.

We found ourselves in a problem, the students study English for at least 7 years. And when they come to foundation year, they a very low level, and teaching the student ESP materials was a hard work. In our experience last year, we faced difficulties in teaching them, some student they do not have very basics (verb to be, verb to have), when they come to the foundation year, how do you think they will learn English?

13. Do you use supplementary materials in teaching the student reading in the foundation year?

We are only use the textbooks that selected by the university, and it is not allowed to use anything rather the textbooks.

14. Since you are talking about the students reading level before starting the preparatory level, I would like to ask you some questions about the reading materials in the secondary level; do you think that reading in the secondary stage prepare the student to meet what they are exposed to at the preparatory level?

I do not have any ideas about what they have studies in their schools, but I can answer to this question from what I see from the students' level. Well, I will answer this question in two ways. The first way, when we talk to the reading texts that students encounter at the preparatory level. I can say yes. This is not because the students come to the preparatory level with good English proficiency and good English reading skills but because the reading texts at the preparatory level are easy and targeting beginners. However, when you asked me whether the reading texts at the secondary level help the students to meet the reading texts that students at the preparatory level should meet? I will say no. The vast majority of the students are not really having adequate vocabulary size and they do not have the knowledge about the academic texts.

15. Ok, now I would like to ask you about the students' reading level and their difficulties at the preparatory level. First, can tell me about your students reading level?

Sure. Honestly I am not satisfied about the student reading level in English, in some cases the students are fail to read a simple sentence correctly. The students are not motivated to learn English, and they see that reading in English and practise English is something beyond their ability, and it is impossible to learn English. Therefore, the students are studying English and they want everything to be done for them. Some of the students do not attend their classes in a regular basis. All these factors could affect their English level and English reading level.

They do not care about English, you can find some students texting during the English classes. This is disappoint you as a teacher, and gives you an impression that the students do not have the readiness for studying yet.

I think most of the students are not really prepared to the study in English medium. I students should come to this level with good English foundation, and what we should do here is improving this English and teach them more academic English. But this is not the case.

16. How do you see the reading level of the students in foundation year?

Seriously, in general, it is below the expected and the satisfactory level. They are really very poor.

17. Why do think that?

I think that return s to many reasons. The first one is what they had studied in the schools and the secondary stage were not enough or may the students themselves were not diligent in their studying. They come to us with very low level and English reading skills. In some cases they could not read a simple sentence. And some of them they do not knew how to write their names in English.

Another reason is that some students think that they do not need English at all. For example, some of the poor English level students said to me, I do not need English because they are going to study their following university year in Arabic. This is not true. And the problem is that those students affect others who might need English to complete their study.

18. Can you tell me about the reading texts at the preparatory level?

In the foundation year we try to teach the student the required level for the foundation year as it is assigned by the university. The text books contains 8 level starts from fundamental A (which is the students level in reality, and the reading texts match their level), the students should be improved when they come to final level, but this not the case for some of the students, as I do not feel that there is a progress in their level. This is because of students themselves the do not study hard in a daily basis. They are not diligent; they are not motivated and serious in their studying. May be they may think to study in Arabic medium majors.

19. Can you describe how the reading texts look like?

At the beginning the students expose to short texts which are mainly in dialogue style, and some of the short texts that talk about general topics. But later level the reading texts become longer.

20. Can you tell me roughly the how long the later reading texts on average?

They are not that long, on average the reading texts at the later levels reach up to 250 words on average.

21. What about the topics of these reading texts?

They are general topics. We do not do any ESP. they discuss general topics such as shopping, food.

22. Do you think that the students face difficulties when they read what is required to be read in the foundation year?

Yes. But not too much when talking in general and these difficulties vary from one to one according to their English level.

23. Can tell me what these difficulties are or give examples?

In general the students face difficulties with the pronunciation; the students face difficulty on pronouncing words properly; and even some students could not pronounce even simple words. Another difficulty that they face is with the vocabulary, they have very limited vocabulary

size. The student sometimes decoded the words but they do not comprehend what they decoded. I think these are the main ones.

24. Why do you think the students face these difficulties?

I think that because the students come with very low of English level and another reason as I told earlier that the students are not really care and motivated to learn English.

25. What is the biggest challenge for the students in understanding a reading text in the foundation year in your opinion?

I think the vocabulary. They do not have good vocabulary size and even they do not study hard to memorize the new vocabulary .Unfortunately the students are not interested to look for the words in a dictionary. They want the teachers do everything for them.

26. What do to do to help the students to overcome their reading problems?

We try to encourage the students to read in English, through given some marks on outside reading.

27. Ok. After discussing the students reading level and difficulties I would like to ask you some questions about the reading texts. Tell me your opinion about the reading texts at the preparatory level English textbooks?

The reading texts at the preparatory level are quite good and they are matching the students' level. They help the students to improve their reading skills and provide the students with many new words in various topics so they could build a conversation in English.

28. Ok, to what extend the reading texts in the foundation year prepare the students to what they read in the first year?

Yes. Off course, the reading texts will help the students to what they read in the first year, but not in 100 %. They could help them in improving their skill and also they increase their vocabulary size. But not they academic and specialised ones because the reading texts are many discussing general topics and contain mainly the general vocabulary for the very day use.

Off course we could not do everything in one year, in this year we only focus on general English. However, I think the students need also to study academic English and English for specific purpose in order to be really well prepared.

29. Why do you think the reading texts are not at the level to prepare the students to the reading that encounter in their first year?

The first reason is the students do not receive reading texts that related to their disciplines, and also they do not study academic reading texts which I think they are more important that the former ones in which the students could learn the skills and they may able to apply to the what they read in their disciplines. So we cannot cut corn if there is no corn.

Another reason is may be the reading texts at the preparatory level are quite low level reading texts quite simple vocabulary and structure especially at the first 2 or 3 books. Also there is not much focus on reading skill as there are quite limited in numbers one or two proper reading texts not in dialogue style. I think the English programme at the preparatory level need a lot of improvements.

30. How??

For example increase the number of the reading texts by using supplementary materials. And the most important increase the time at least three terms instead of two. And the third one should focus on academic and ESP reading texts.

31. Do you have anything you need to add at the end of this interview?

I would to say that you are one of the people who can help his country. You should do your best to help your society and your country. Also I think you are discussing a very good topic the ministry of education and the all the university should know about what they are teaching at the schools and universities. Are they doing the right things? Do you they really teach the students what they should be taught? Regardless about the way and other practical problems that may happen in all education systems, but here you are talking about the basic think which is the materials. Good luck.

Appendix I: The consent form**FORM OF CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH PROJECT****CONFIDENTIAL****Title of project/investigation:**

The suitability of the EFL reading texts at the secondary and preparatory levels as a preparation for academic reading at first year university level in Saudi Arabia

Brief outline of project, including an outline of the procedures to be used:

This study is an investigation of students' reading ability in Northern Borders University in the kingdom of Saud Arabia. The focus of the study was on probing the views of Secondary, preparatory level and first years university students, and their teachers in relation to the suitability of the reading texts at the secondary level for preparing the students to the reading at the preparatory level and suitability of the reading texts at the preparatory level for preparing the students to first year university reading. The data for the study comes from three main sources: (a) semi-structured interviews with teachers, (b) semi-structured questionnaires and semi-instructed interview with the students, and (c) reading texts analysis.

By signing below I acknowledge the following:

- The participation in this study is voluntary, and I have agreed to participate.
- I have been informed of and understand the purpose of this study
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice
- I have had the opportunity to ask any questions
- I understand that the data will be anonymous and my identity will not be revealed when the findings of the research will publish.

participant's full name:.....Signed.....Date .../.../...

I, SAUD ALENEZI *(**Investigator's** full name) certify that the details of this project/investigation have been fully explained and described in writing to the subject named above and have been understood by him/her.

Signed

Date.....

(Investigator)

E-mail:

smalen@essex.ac.uk

Mobile no: UK (0044)
07446844607

Supervisor details

Mr Phil Scholfield

Appendix J: Examnples from each corpus

This Appendix presents extracts form each corpus. The general vocabulary was highlighted in blue, Academic vocabulary (based on AWL (Coxhead, 2000)) was highlighted in yellow, and finally the technical words and words in the off-list were highlighted in red.

EFSA corpus

The Holy Month of Ramadan

Islam is based on five beliefs. These are called “the five pillars of Islam”. The first belief is that there is no god but Allah and that Mohammed (peace be upon him) is his messenger. The second is that a Muslim must pray five times a day at certain times, and the third is that a Muslim must give a percentage of his savings to the poor. The fourth is fasting of Ramadan. The fifth is that all Muslims who are able should perform Al-Hajj at least one in their life.

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. All adult Muslims must fast during the daylight hours. They are not allowed to eat or drink between dawn the sunset for the whole month. Fasting strengthens a person by increasing his self-control. It also helps a Muslim to keep on remembering Allah and obeying Him. During Ramadan, the feeling of the hunger is shared by everyone. This way shows equality among Muslims.

Some people (children for example) are excused from fasting. Some may be too old or too ill. Others are on journeys, woman who are expecting or nursing a baby cannot fast at that time, either. However, all those who are able must complete their fast later.

Ramadan customs are very special. Many Muslims prefer to change working hours so that they can focus on the Islamic duties of the Holy Month. At sunset as call for prayer

announces people break their fast with dates and water. Then, they go to the mosque for the sunset prayer (Maghrib). The exact time of sunset is very important, of course.

There is a special night known as “Lailatul Qader”. No one knows exactly which night it is, but it is definitely one of the last ten nights of the month. Around this time, Muslims try to stay awake all night and perform special prayers, in order to seek Lailatul Qader.

Immediately after the last day of Ramadan, there is a celebration called Eid Al-Fitr. Muslims all over the world celebrates this holiday. During Eid, Muslim children wear new clothes and receive gifts. Families everywhere enjoy themselves with friends and relatives. The thank Allah for His great blessings in revealing the Quran during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

FHFSa corpus

The oldest man in the world

According to the Newspaper report, a man who was born in Saudi Arabia but now he lives in the UAE, is claiming to be the oldest man in the world.

The family of Nasser recently discovered that the age on his UAE identity card is much higher than anyone imagined- not 80 or 90 but an amazing 135.

He is in a good health and told to the newspaper, through his grandson Mohammed, how he has managed to live so long and stay healthy. He always eats freshly cooked food and practises the Bedouin lifestyle. He wakes up early, drinks camel's milk and eats dates every day.

He was born and brought up in Saudi Arabia and when he was young, he used to be shepherd. As a soldier, he even took part in a number of battles in the early 1900s.

His life has changed a lot and he is proud that he is not dependent on anybody to survive, although he does live in a house with his eight grandchildren. These days, he does not go out much except to go to the mosques five times a day to pray. But people often visit him to hear Nabati poems, which he loves reciting, and stories from a time ago.

Mohammed says the family are going to contact the Guinness Book of World Records to record his grandfather as the oldest man in the world.

Preparatory level (Top Notch) coprus

On a Budget?

Here are some alternatives to hotels

Have you thought about a hostel?

Hostels provide friendly overnight accommodation for travellers. Hostels are clean, safe, and inexpensive. They usually have great locations, right in the heart of the city, or just outside of town. Most hostels offer fully equipped self-service kitchens, dining areas, and common rooms for relaxing and socialising with other travellers. Some hostels even have laundry services, libraries, and attentive staff.

A bed and breakfast might be for you.

Bed and breakfast, also called “B&Bs”, can be a home away from home when travel. This type of accommodation is usually in a private house and sometimes can offer a great atmosphere. As a guest, you get a clean, cosy room, and as the name suggests, breakfast is included. B&B can be a great deal!

How about camping under the stars?

Campgrounds let you spend the night outdoors without spending a lot of money. Many campgrounds are located in beautiful parks filled with incredible nature.

Depending on the campgrounds, you can spend a really comfortable night. Most offer showers and running water, and some even offer electricity. Camping is usually the most economical. Way to spend the night. Plus, you cannot beat the views.

English and department reading (first year) corpus

How Can I Get to the Post Office?

I have a special rule for travel: Never carry a map. I prefer to ask for directions. Sometimes I get lost, but I usually have a good time. And there are some other advantages: I can practice a new language, meet new people, learn new customs, and the like. I learn about different "styles" of directions every time I ask, "How can I get to the post office?" Here are some illustrations of those differences.

Tourists are often confused in Japan. That is because most streets there don't have names. Outside big cities, people, most often use landmarks in their directions. For example, the Japanese might tell travellers something like this: "Go straight down to the corner. Turn left at the big hotel with the sushi bar and-go past the fruit market in the post office across from the bus stop next to the fast food fried chicken place."

In the United States, people might give directions in different ways according to their region or community. In the countryside of the American Midwest, for example, there are not usually many landmarks. There are no mountains, so the land is very flat; in many places there are no towns or buildings for miles. Instead of landmarks, residents of the flatlands will tell you directions (like north, south, east, and west) and distances, like two miles. In the states of Kansas or Iowa, for instance, people will say things such as, "Take this road here. Go straight north for two miles. Make a right turn, and then go another mile in a northeast direction. Keep to the left around the curve. Then merge with Local Route 12." In most cities, however, people will name the streets, number of blocks, even the number of stoplights or stop signs.

People in towns or cities might say, "Go straight for five blocks. Turn left at Main Street. Go to the third stoplight and turn right. That's Sixth Street. The post office is two blocks up on your left."

Many people around the world can get street directions on the Internet. People in Canada, the United States, and many European countries can go to a website to get directions. They enter (type in) a start point and an end point for their trip. Then they get instructions like these: "Take 140 (the Interstate Highway) 26 miles." "Go straight (East)." "Enter Texas." "Keep left (Northwest) 8.7 miles." "Turn right." "Merge onto Turner Turnpike." "At Exit 5B, take Ramp (RIGHT) towards Oklahoma City, Oklahoma." They print out these directions and carry the papers with them, sometimes with a map.

Without a computer printout, on the other hand, some people in Los Angeles, California, may have no idea of distance on the map. Residents of this Pacific coast area are almost always in their cars, so they measure distance in time. "How far away is the post office?" you ask. "Oh," they might answer, "I guess it's about five minutes from here." You say, "Yes, but how many miles away is it or how many kilometres or blocks?" They rarely know or they can seldom say.

Sometimes, people in Greece do not even try to give a direction that is because tourists seldom understand the Greek language. Instead, a Greek person may motion or gesture or say, "Follow me." Then that person will lead you through the streets of a city to the post office.

What if a person doesn't know the answer to your question about the location of a place? A New Yorker might say, "Sorry, I have no idea" and walk away quickly. But in Yucatan, Mexico, not many residents answer, "I don't know." People in Yucatan may believe that a quick "I don't

know" is impolite. They might stay and talk to you—and usually they'll try to give an answer, sometimes a wrong one. A tourist without a good sense of direction can get very, very lost in this southern region!

One thing will help you everywhere in Japan, the United States, Greece, Mexico, or any other place. You might not understand a person's words, but you can probably understand the body language like facial expressions, gestures, movements, and so on. He or she will usually turn and then point his or her finger in a particular direction. Go in that direction and you'll find the post office maybe!

Medicine Corpous

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Gluconeogenic

Gluconeogenic precursors include all the intermediates of glycolysis and the citric acid cycle, glycerol released during the hydrolysis of triacylglycerols in adipose tissue, lactate released into the blood by cells that lack mitochondria and by exercising skeletal muscle, and keto acids derived from the metabolism of glucogenic amino acids. Seven of the reactions of glycolysis are reversible and are used for gluconeogenesis in the liver and kidneys. Three reactions are physiologically irreversible and must be circumvented. These reactions are catalyzed by the glycolytic enzymes pyruvate kinase, phosphofructokinase, and hexokinase. Pyruvate is converted to phosphoenolpyruvate (PEP) by pyruvate carboxylase and PEP carboxykinase. The carboxylase requires biotin and ATP, and is allosterically activated by acetyl CoA. PEP carboxykinase requires GTP. The transcription of its mRNA is increased by glucagon and decreased by insulin. Fructose biphosphate is converted to fructose phosphate by fructose biphosphatase. This enzyme is inhibited by elevated levels of AMP and activated by elevated levels of ATP. The enzyme is also inhibited by fructose biphosphate, the primary allosteric activator of glycolysis. Glucose phosphate is converted to glucose by glucose phosphatase. This enzyme activity is required for the final step in glycogen degradation, as well as gluconeogenesis. A deficiency of this enzyme results in type to glycogen storage disease, covalently attached. They differ from the proteoglycans in that the length of the glycoprotein's carbohydrate chain is relatively short (usually two to ten sugar residues long, although they can be longer). The carbohydrates of glycoproteins do not have serial repeats as do

glycosaminoglycans. Membrane-bound glycoproteins participate in a broad range of cellular phenomena, including cell surface recognition (by other cells, hormones, viruses), cell surface antigenicity (such as the blood group antigens), and as components of the extracellular matrix and of the mucins of the gastrointestinal and urogenital tracts, where they act as protective biologic lubricants. In addition, almost all of the globular proteins present in human plasma are glycoproteins. Glycoproteins are synthesized in the endoplasmic reticulum and the Golgi. The precursors of the carbohydrate components of glycoproteins are sugar nucleotides. O-linked glycoproteins are synthesized by the sequential transfer of sugars from their nucleotide carriers to the protein; N-linked glycoproteins contain varying amounts of mannose. They are synthesized by the transfer of a pre-formed oligosaccharide from its membrane lipid carrier, dolichol, to the protein. They also require dolichol, an intermediate carrier of the growing oligosaccharide chain. A deficiency in the phosphorylation of mannose residues in N-linked glycoprotein pre-enzymes destined for the lysosomes results in I-cell disease. Glycoproteins are degraded in lysosomes by acid hydrolases. A deficiency of one of these enzymes results in a glycoprotein storage disease (oligosaccharidosis), resulting in accumulation of partially degraded structures in the lysosome.

Engineering

unit cells

The unit cell is a subdivision of the crystalline lattice that still retains the overall characteristics of the entire lattice a unit cell is shown in the lattice in figure by the heavy lines by stacking identical unit cells the entire lattice can be constructed

we identify fourteen types of unit cells or bravais lattices grouped in seven crystal structures figure and table lattice points are located at the corners of the unit cells and in some cases at either faces or the centre of the unit cell let look at some of the characteristics of a lattice or unit cell lattice parameter the lattice parameters which describe the size and shape of the unit cell include the dimensions of the sides of the unit cell and the angles between the sides figure in a cubic crystal system only the length of one of the sides of the cube is necessary to completely describe the cell angles of number are assumed unless otherwise specified this length measured at room-temperature is the lattice parameter the length is often given in angstrom units or nanometers

several lattice parameters are required to define the size and shape of complex unit cells for an orthorhombic unit cell we must specify the dimensions of all three sides of the cell a , b , and c and co-hexagonal unit cells require two dimensions a and the angle of number between the a axes the most complicated cell the triclinic cell is described by three lengths and three angles of atoms per unit cell a specific number of lattice points defines each of the unit cells for example the corners of the cells are easily identified as are body and face centred positions figure when

counting the number of lattice points belonging to each unit cell we must recognize that lattice points may be shared by more than one unit cell a lattice point at a corner of one unit cell is shared by seven adjacent unit cells only fifteen of each corner belongs to one particular cell thus the eight of lattice points from the corner positions in one unit cell is eight.